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RULES OF DISCIPLINE

OF THE

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3599

YEARLY-MEETING,

HELD

ON RHODE-ISLAND,

FOR

NEW-ENGLAND.

And Society of New England Yearly Meeting.

PRINTED BY DIRECTION OF THE MEETING.

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INTRODUCTION.

ms. no. 29 Oct. 1862.
SINCE the printing of the Book of Discipline, about twenty-four years have elapsed, during which period the new regulations which have taken place have rendered it an imperfect collection of the rules of the Society, and the Book being out of print, the Yearly-Meeting committed the revisal of our Discipline to the Meeting for Sufferings, in 1807, who having with care and diligence completed, and laid the same before the Yearly-Meeting, in the sixth month, 1809; they adopted the following as the Discipline of the Society, and directed the same to be printed, in order,

1st. That every quarterly and monthly-meeting may be furnished with a fair and correct collection of the minutes and advices which have been agreed to, for regulating the affairs of the Society.

2dly. "That these minutes and advices being more generally received, may be more uniformly observed and put in practice, that order, unity, peace and harmony, may be preserved throughout the churches."

3dly. "That in an especial manner the youth of the present and succeeding generations may

not only be early and more fully instructed in our religious principles, but in the nature and design of our Christian discipline; and through divine assistance be enabled to adorn our holy profession, by a consistent conduct and circumspect conversation in all godliness and honesty, thereby avoiding the reproach which some, through a defection in principle, or a degeneracy in practice, have brought upon themselves, and the body of which they profess to be members."

4thly. "That the unfaithful, the immoral, and the libertine professors, may be seasonably reminded of their danger and of their duty, as well as of the great labor, which, in much gospel love, hath been from time to time bestowed for their help and recovery; and that such as continue to despise and reject the convictions of truth, and the counsel of their brethren, and refuse to be reclaimed, may be made sensible that they themselves are the cause of their separation from our religious fellowship and communion."

And in order that these purposes may be more fully answered, the following rules and regulations are, on due consideration, recommended to the observance of friends, overseers and meetings. And in the exercise of which, care, persuasion and gentle dealing, ought to be our practice, laboring in love and meekness, to bring such as transgress to a sense of their error. But if any cannot be reclaimed, by our Christian endeavors, the extent of our judgment and procedure is, the disowning such to be of our communion. And as this authority and practice is Christian, so it is laudable and rea-

sonable in society; and as it is attended to, in uprightness and singleness of heart, will tend to promote the good and welfare of the Church, and to unite in a care and concern for the oversight one of another, that all may endeavor to walk decently, humbly, and honestly, and be of one mind, as becomes the servants and followers of our Holy Lord and Law-Giver, and to practice that commendable order, ever necessary in the Christian Church, agreeable to that injunction of our blessed Lord, Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother: but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican."

Also the expressions of that eminent apostle, Paul, in his epistle to the Phillippians, iv. 8. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Now whatsoever appears in any contrary to these, may in general be said to come under the notice of friends, overseers and meetings.

And as it has been experienced, that in those meetings great comfort and satisfaction have been

received and enjoyed, when the members have attended them in awe, humility, and love, with no other view than the honor of God, and the help and assistance one of another, this meeting doth, in brotherly love, exhort all friends carefully to gather in uprightness and singleness of heart, suitable to our calling, and the dignity of that Power which will preside and govern in all our meetings, as we meekly abide under its holy influence. This will divest us of partiality and stiffness of opinion, and all high thoughts of ourselves, and lead into patience and condescension, according to that declaration of our blessed Lord, "He that is greatest among you, shall be your servant."

It is to be observed, that the dates at the end of the minutes and advices, denote the years in which they were issued by the yearly-meeting from whence they were taken.

The book is printed with blank leaves, for the purpose of making future additions, which are to be inserted in the manner which may be directed by the yearly-meeting. No other additions are to be made.

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IF any person or persons shall think themselves injured or aggrieved by the judgement of any monthly-meeting, of which they were a member or members, such person or persons may appeal to the quarterly-meeting, to which the said monthly-meeting doth belong ; provided notice be given of such intended appeal, in three months after such judgment is given ; and the appeal must be lodged in such quarterly-meeting, within six months after such notice.

If any persons be dissatisfied with the judgment of any quarterly-meeting, they may appeal from such judgment to the yearly-meeting ; the appellants giving notice to the said quarterly-meeting of their intentions to appeal, within six months after the judgment of such quarterly-meeting is given ; and such appeal must be brought to the next quarterly-meeting, if it may with convenience, or to the next following.

If any appellant or appellants do not bring his, her or their appeal to the yearly-meeting next ensuing, due notice once given, then, if such appellants continue their appeal, notice shall be repeated in writing to the meeting against which

they may appeal, at least three months preceding the yearly-meeting. 1745.

And when any persons manifest their intention of appealing from the judgment of a monthly or quarterly-meeting, that such meeting appoint a suitable number of friends to attend the superior meeting, with a copy of their doings signed by the clerk, there to manifest the reason upon which such judgment was founded : which superior meeting is to take said appeal into consideration and determine thereon, by a committee to be appointed for that purpose.

It is concluded, that appeals to the yearly-meeting be entered and acted upon on the third day of the week. 1806.

It is the judgment of this meeting, that monthly-meetings have a right, in cases of reversal of their judgment against any individual member, on account of irregular dealing *only*, to take up the case again, and proceed according to discipline ; and it is recommended to committees of superior meetings to be careful, when reversals are made on account of irregular dealing *only*, to express the same in their report. 1807.

ARBITRATION.

AGREED, that the choosing of arbitrators is proper in cases of difference about a man's property. 1684.

Whereas it sometimes happeneth to the hurt of truth, and grief of many friends, that differences do arise amongst some professing truth, about outward things: it is therefore by this meeting thought convenient, and advised, that when any friend or friends shall hear of any such difference betwixt any friends in that meeting to which they do belong, that they forthwith speak to and tenderly advise, the persons between whom the difference is, to make a speedy end thereof; and if that friend or those friends do not comply with their advice, that then they take to them one or two friends more, and again exhort them to end their difference; and if they or either of them refuse, then to let them know, that it is the advice and counsel of friends, that they should each choose an equal number of indifferent, impartial and judicious friends, to hear and speedily determine the same; and that they do bind themselves to stand to their award and determination, or the award and determination of

the major part of them, that shall be made and signed by the arbitrators.

Also this meeting doth advise, that if any person professing the truth among us and esteemed a friend, shall refuse speedily to end the difference, or refer it as before advised, complaint be made of that person or persons unto the monthly-meeting to which he doth belong: and if after admonition he shall refuse so to refer his case, that then the meeting do testify against such person, and disown him to be of our society, until he shall comply with the equal methods and agreements of our society, and by such his compliance doth declare that he is for peace, and doth seek and desire it: And when any person, so refusing, is testified against by the meeting and disowned, the other person may have his liberty to seek his remedy against him at law. 1697.

Advised, that in all cases of controversy and difference, the persons concerned therein either speedily compose the difference between themselves or make choice of some faithful friends to determine the same; or otherwise, if they cannot agree upon the choice, to submit to the monthly-meeting's choice of certain persons meet to inspect and determine the controversy, and to stand to their award and final determination thereof; that such controversies may not be continued, to cause a reproach. 1692.

And it is the advice of this meeting, that persons differing about outward things do, as little as may be, trouble public ministering friends with being arbitrators in such cases. 1697.

And that all persons differing, be exhorted by the monthly-meeting to which they belong, when their cases are referred, and judgment and award made, signed and given thereupon, as aforesaid, to stand to and perform the said award, which they have bound themselves to perform: And if any shall refuse so to do, that then the monthly-meeting to which such person doth belong, upon notice thereof to them given, shall appoint a suitable committee to labor with him, and if he do not make it evident, that there is manifest error or injustice, they admonish him thereunto; and if after admonition he persist to refuse, then the meeting to testify against him as before; but if such error or injustice be made to appear, then the matter be reconsidered by the same or other arbitrators, as in the judgment of the monthly-meeting may appear best, and such correcting judgment be final. And the bonds of arbitration are not to be considered binding and final, where evident error or injustice is made to appear, and it is advised that bonds be written accordingly; but where this is not manifest, such bonds be conclusive and final.

It is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that if any person professing truth with us, shall arrest, sue, or implead at law, any other of our members, before he hath proceeded in the methods herein before recommended, that such person doth therein depart from the principle of truth and the known way thereof, and acts contrary thereunto, and ought to be dealt with by the meeting he belongs to, for the same; and if he shall not give

satisfaction to the meeting, for such his disorderly proceeding, by condemning it, and himself therein, that then he be disowned by the meeting. 1697. 1692.

And if the party so sued or arrested taking with him, or if under confinement, sending one or two friends to the person who goes to law, shall complain thereof, the said person shall be required immediately to stay proceedings; and if he does not comply with such requisition, the monthly-meeting to which he belongs shall disown him, if the case require it. 1782.

So much of the minute as doth relate simply to the entering into bonds, and so far as arbitrations may be refused on account of disputes and questions in law, relating to executors or trustees, where the property is not their own, in both these cases, that there be a particular and special regard had to the nature and circumstances of things, it not being either now, nor at the time of making the said minute, the intent of this meeting, in the above described or other cases, to lay any unwarrantable burthen upon any brother, nor upon the church of God. 1720.

THE following method is to be observed in proceeding in Arbitrations.

1. Each party having chosen one or two indifferent, impartial and judicious friends, those so chosen are to agree upon a third or a fifth friend, unless the parties first agree in the nomination, whose name shall be inserted with the others in the bonds of arbitration, or other written agreement.

2. The arbitrators should not consider themselves as advocates for the party by whom they were chosen, but men, whose incumbent duty it is to judge righteously, fearing the Lord. They should shun all previous information respecting the case, that they may not become biased in their judgments before they hear both parties together.

3. The parties to enter into written engagements or bonds, if either of them require it, to abide by the award of the arbitrators, or a majority of them, to be made in a limited time.

4. Every meeting of the arbitrators must be made known to the parties concerned, until they have been fully heard, nor shall there be any separate private meetings between some of the arbitrators, or with one party separate from the other, on the business referred to them; and no representation of the case of one party, either by writing or otherwise, be admitted, without its being fully made known to the other, and, if required, a copy to be delivered to the other party.

5. The arbitrators are to hear both parties fully, in the presence of each other, whilst either hath any fresh matter to offer, until a certain time, to be limited by mutual agreement. Let no evidence or witness be withheld or rejected.

6. If there should appear to the arbitrators, or any of them, to be any doubtful point of law, they are jointly to agree upon a case, and consult counsel thereupon.

The arbitrators are not required to express in the award their reasons for their decision. One writing of the award is to be delivered to each party.

It is recommended to arbitrators to propose to the parties, that they should give an acknowledgement in writing, before the award be made, that they have been candidly and fully heard.

Matters of defamation are not subjects to be arbitrated, until the defamation is proved, and that some injury is sustained by the defamed, in his trade, calling, or property ; and in that case the damage should be submitted to arbitration. 1782. But where damage is not proved to be sustained, the person defaming is liable to be dealt with, as provided under head Defamation.

B O O K S.

IT being recommended to the meeting for sufferings, to take the oversight of all writings proposed to be printed, which relate to our religious principles or testimonies, our members who may have any such publications in view, are to lay them before the said meeting for its advice and concurrence. And it is the sense of this meeting, that if any friend shall print or publish any such writing, without laying it before said meeting, or against the advice of said meeting for sufferings, such persons should be complained of to the monthly-meeting they belong to, and if they cannot be convinced of the impropriety of their conduct, be testified against, as opposed to the peace and good order of the society.

This meeting doth earnestly exhort all parents, heads of families, and guardians of minors, that they prevent as much as in them lies, their children, and others under their care and tuition, from having or reading books and papers tending to prejudice the profession of the Christian religion, to create the least doubt concerning the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, or of those saving truths

declared in them, lest their infant and feeble minds should be poisoned thereby, and a foundation laid for the greatest evils. And it is earnestly recommended to all members of our religious society, that they discourage and suppress the reading of plays, pernicious novels, and other bad books. And printers and booksellers in profession with us, are cautioned against printing, selling or lending such books, as it is a practice inconsistent with the purity of the Christian religion. And friends are desired to be careful in the choice of all books in which their children and families read, seeing there are many under the specious titles of promoting religion and morality, which contain sentiments repugnant to the truth in Christ Jesus.

And monthly-meetings are desired to provide the families of poor friends, with friends' books, and such as are adapted to the instruction and edification of their children.

It is recommended, that the meeting for sufferings do distribute friends' books in such manner, and such places, as it may think proper.

B U R I A L S.

ALTHOUGH we do not feel disposed to enjoin any particular mode, with respect to burials, yet we recommend the attention of friends to the practice of the society, as anciently described, viz.

“ If the corpse of the deceased be near any public meeting-house, it is usually carried thither, for the more convenient reception of those that accompany it to the grave-yard ; and it so falls out sometimes, that while the meeting is gathering for the burial, some or other have a word of exhortation, for the sake of the people there met together ; after which the body is borne away by the young men, or those that are of their neighborhood, or that were most of the intimacy of the deceased party ; the corpse being in a plain coffin, without any covering or furniture upon it. At the ground, they pause sometime before they put the body into its grave, that if any there should have any thing upon them to exhort the people, they may not be disappointed, and that the relations may the more retiredly and solemnly take their last leave of the corpse of their departed kindred, and the spectators have a sense of mortality, by the occasion then given them to reflect upon their own latter end.”

And in order that burials be commendably and decently accomplished, as well as for the assistance of those immediately concerned, monthly-meetings are advised to appoint some solid friends to attend thereat.

And whereas friends in some places have gone into the vain and empty custom of erecting monuments over the dead bodies of friends, for distinction, by tombstones, inscriptions, &c., and we being very desirous friends should keep a commendable plainness and simplicity in this, as well as other respects ; it is therefore the advice of this meeting, that all such monuments over dead bodies of friends, should be removed, as much as may be with discretion and conveniency ; and that none be any where made or set up, near or over the dead bodies of friends or others, in friend's burying places, for time to come. And it is recommended to friends, as much as may be, to get into the practice of burying our dead in rows ; grown people by themselves, and children by themselves, without any distinction of families or relatives, and to take care that graveyards are decently inclosed.

According to the primitive simplicity and innocence of friends, it is the advice of this meeting, that no friends imitate the world in any distinction of habit or otherwise, as marks or tokens of mourning for the dead. 1717.

Advised against imitating the vain custom of wearing, or giving mourning, and all extravagant expenses about the interment of the dead. 1724.

CHILDREN.

INASMUCH as we have a large body of youth growing up, the offspring of friends, these call for our special care and concern, that they may be preserved in the way of truth, in which our forefathers walked; and in order thereto, we tenderly recommend to all parents and guardians, first, that they take heed to themselves, that their own spirits be rightly seasoned and directed, for the help and good government of their children; and then that they have a constant watchful eye in love over them for their good, and keep them as much as possible within their notice and observation; for this we are sensible of, that the miscarriages of youth have very much proceeded from their being imprudently indulged, or left to themselves, by which means they become exposed to the danger of evil examples on the one hand, and vicious corrupt principles on the other, with which the world too much abounds: and therefore we earnestly and tenderly advise all parents and guardians to be watchfully concerned in this respect, and that they take all proper occasions, both by example and instruction, to help their

children ; and that mothers of children as well as fathers, as they have frequently the best opportunities, would take particular care to instruct them in the knowledge of religion, and the Holy Scriptures ; because it has been found by experience that good impressions early made on the tender minds of children, have proved lasting means of preserving them in a religious life and conversation. This practice was enjoined strongly upon the people of Israel by Moses and Joshua, the servants of the Lord, who required them to read or repeat the law to their children ; and the apostle Paul takes notice of Timothy's being well instructed in the Holy Scriptures from a child, and of the unfeigned faith which dwelt in his grand-mother Lois, and his mother Eunice, 2 Tim. i. 5, who no doubt had a religious care of his education.

But when parents or guardians are deficient in such their care, we recommend to monthly-meetings, that they stir them up thereto, either by visiting them in their families, or in such manner as in the wisdom of God they may see meet ; that so the doctrines of the gospel, and a conversation agreeable thereunto, may be maintained unto all generations. 1732.

It is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that the natural right of membership extend to all children, born of parents who are both members, and should one of the parents be disowned, it shall not prejudice the right of those children born afterwards, provided the other parent remain in membership.

That where but one of the parents is a member, become so by application or otherwise, their children shall not be considered members, unless such parent make application to the monthly-meeting, on account of their children, and the meeting judge such children suitable to admitted as members.

And it is advised that where but one of the parents is a member of our society, that they endeavor to bring up their children agreeable to truth, as far as is in their power, and when they think it suitable for them to be members, not to neglect asking the care of friends in their behalf. 1774.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

It is our principle, and hath ever been our practice, to be subject to whatsoever government is set over us, either by doing or suffering. 1660, renewed in 1782.

This is our principle, and hath ever been our practice, to obey authority by doing or suffering, not disputing whether the authority in itself be absolutely of God or not, yet being an authority over us, we are to obey it either by doing or suffering, because it is an authority. 1661, renewed 1782.

Advised to walk wisely and circumspectly towards all men, in the peaceable spirit of Christ Jesus, giving no offence or occasions to those in outward government nor way to any controversies, heats, and distractions of this world about the kingdoms of it; but to pray for the good of all, and submit all to that divine power and wisdom which rules over the kingdoms of men. 1689.

This meeting was well satisfied, and very glad of the sense it had of the innocency and peaceableness of the body of friends in general, towards the civil government under which we live, and enjoy our present liberty in the peaceable exercise of our ten-

der consciences towards Almighty God, to whom we are humbly thankful for the same, being obliged to demean ourselves not only as grateful people, but as a Christian society, to live peaceably and inoffensively under the present government, as we have always done under the various revolutions, of government, ever since we were a people according to our ancient Christian principle and practice ; in which we hope we shall ever persevere, according as we are enjoined by our peaceable Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Christian advice of his faithful servants and ministers among us : We being a people clear, in the sight of God, from all evil designs, plots, and conspiracies whatsoever, and hope we shall continue a people always quiet in the land, having nothing but love and good will to all men.

Persuaded this our ancient Christian testimony, publicly owned among us, none can gainsay, nor any faithful friends can ever decline ; being assured, that the Lord will in his own due time, remove all offences and causeless jealousies and reproaches, tending to cloud our innocency, and will set his own power and the peaceable kingdom of his dear Son over all. 1692.

We cannot for conscience sake actively comply with some things enjoined by human laws, yet the principles we profess, as well as the Holy Scriptures, require that we should “render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,” and be punctual in the payment of every tribute, which we can justly do, without acting in opposition to that sacred illumination bestowed upon us by the Father of Lights,

not only to teach, but also to enable us to perform every duty with uprightness and integrity, both to God, and to those who, in the course of his providence, are placed in authority. 1757.

For the preservation of our fellow-members, it appears necessary for this meeting to issue forth the following advices, viz :

That they strictly adhere to our long professed and invariable principle, against being concerned in pulling down and setting up, or bringing about revolutions in outward government, by outward force, human policy or contrivance ; and also that they be not deceived with the flattering prospect of being clothed with secular authority, either legislative, judicial or executive, knowing these things have a tendency rather to brace the mind with pride, and expose to various temptations, than to humble the creature ; therefore shun temptation, seek humility, the way to be clothed with authority in the truth, and be contented with the honor and dignity thereof. 1782.

It is our sense and judgment, that no friend can, consistent with our Christian testimony, run, or make, or countenance on his behalf to be made, any short entries of goods, wares or merchandize, imported, on which the government have laid any impost, duties or excise ; but that a true and honest manifest thereof be exhibited to the proper office for receiving the same, and if there should be any who have a conscientious scruple against the payment of such imposts, duties or excise, which may now or hereafter be required, they acquaint the offi-

cer or the government therewith, who we doubt not will be tender in that respect ; as we, as a people, mean to be subject to the laws passively, where our consciences restrain from active compliance therewith.

And if any of our members should act inconsistently herewith, or should buy or vend any goods, knowing them to be run or short entered, that Monthly-meetings deal with such as disorderly walkers.

Liberty of conscience being the common right of all men, and particularly essential to the well-being of religious societies, hence we hold it to be indispensably incumbent upon us to maintain it inviolably among ourselves ; and therefore advise and exhort all in profession with us, to decline the acceptance of any office or station in civil government, the duties of which are inconsistent with our religious principles, or in the exercise of which they may be under the necessity of exacting of their brethren any compliances against which we are conscientiously scrupulous. And if any persons in membership with us, notwithstanding this advice, shall persist in conduct so reverse to our principles and religious liberty, it is the sense of this meeting that they be treated with as in other cases of offence ; and if they cannot be brought to see and acknowledge their error, that the monthly-meeting to which they belong should proceed to testify our disunity with them.

And it is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that friends ought not, in any wise, to be active or

accessary in electing, or promoting to be elected, their brethren to such offices or stations in civil government, the execution whereof tends to lay waste our christian testimony, or subject their brethren or others to sufferings on account of their conscientious scruples.

Believing that we are called to show forth to the world, in life and practice, the blessed reign of the Messiah, the Prince of Peace ; under the influence of these principles, we cannot consistently join with such as form combinations of a hostile nature against any ; much less in opposition to those placed in sovereign or subordinate authority ; nor can we unite with or encourage such as revile and asperse them, for it is written “ thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” Acts xxiii. 5.

CONDUCT AND CONVERSATION.

WE earnestly beseech all friends, and the youth especially, to avoid all such conversation as tends to draw out their minds into the foolish and wicked pastimes with which this age abounds ; particularly balls, gaming-places, horse-races and play-houses, those nurseries of debauchery and wickedness, the burthen and grief of the sober part of other societies, as well as of our own ; practices wholly unbecoming a people under the Christian profession, &c.

And where any professing with us are found transgressing this advice, or are in the practice of any immoralities, or other reproachful conduct, that the monthly-meeting where such transgressors belong deal with them.

It is earnestly recommended to all friends, resorting to our annual or other public assemblies, to be very careful at their inns, or other places where they may lodge or converse, to be prudent in all manner of behavior, both in public and private ; avoiding all intemperance in eating and drinking, and likewise foolish jesting, or any undue liberty whatsoever ; that our conversation, sea-

soned with the fear of God, may appear correspondent to our profession, and answer the witness of God in others. 1739.

It is the sense of this meeting, that chewing tobacco, and taking snuff, unnecessary going out of our religious meetings, laughing and other indecent behaviour therein, and frequent or unnecessary conversation at the breaking up thereof, are practices inconsistent with Christian gravity, and unbecoming the solemnity of the occasion; and friends are desired to labor to suppress the same, and where any, contrary to the Christian advices of their brethren or sisters, continue therein, it is recommended to the meetings they belong to, to deal with them as with those who refuse the advice of their friends.

CONVINCED PERSONS.

WE esteem it very necessary and requisite, that young convinced and well inclined persons be early visited in the love of God, by faithful friends, for their encouragement, help, and furtherance in truth. 1710.

We earnestly entreat that an holy care may rest upon all professors of truth, to walk circumspectly as good examples; that in a particular manner the ministers and elders may carefully watch, that their conduct may be to the edification and strength of the honest, though sometimes weak inquirers. 1753.

Advised, that for initiating convinced persons into membership with us, that they apply to a preparative meeting and make their request, and if the preparative meeting approve the same, that it inform the monthly-meeting thereof, whereupon the monthly-meeting may appoint some suitable friends to inquire into their lives and conversations, and also take a solid opportunity of conference with them, in order the better to understand, whether their motives for such request be sincere and from true conviction, and

make report of their suitableness to become members accordingly, which if satisfactory to the meeting, a minute be then made thereon, signifying its acceptance of such persons as members of our society.

But in all such cases, friends are desired carefully to attend to the advice of the apostle, viz. "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

COVETOUSNESS.

LET none strive nor covet to be rich in this world, in these changeable things that will pass away ; but let your faith stand in the Lord God, who changes not, that created all, and gives the increase of all. 1676.

We do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, warn and charge all that profess the truth amongst us, to take heed and beware of covetousness, over-reaching, oppressing and defrauding of any, from whence strife, contention and law-suits, do often arise ; and if any difference about these things do happen among you, to stop and suppress it. 1697.

As our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ exhorted and warned to take heed and beware of covetousness, which is idolatry, we are concerned that all professing Christianity among us may take heed of pride, covetousness, and hastening to be rich in the world, which are pernicious and growing evils ; let them be watched against, resisted and suppressed, in the fear and dread of Almighty God, and have no place or countenance in his camp. O, ye grave elders, both men and

women! be careful and watchful against these evils, and over the youth in these cases. 1720.

We beseech you to stand upon your guard against the allurements and temptations of this evil world: and beware of an ambitious and covetous spirit, by which many are ensnared in too eager a pursuit of earthly enjoyments: the danger of which is thus described by the apostle Paul: "They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare; and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition: For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Beware therefore, dearly beloved, lest you also, being led aside by the love of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, fall from your own steadfastness. 1740.

DAYS AND TIMES.

Some reasons for not observing Fasts and Feast Days and Times, and other human injunctions and institutions relative to the worship of God.

EVER since we were a people we have had a testimony against formal worship, being convinced by the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ, the testimonies of his apostles, and our own experience, that the worship and prayers which God accepts, are such only as are produced by the influence and assistance of his Holy Spirit ; we cannot therefore consistently unite with any in the observation of public fasts, feasts, and what they term holy days ; or such injunctions and forms as are devised in man's will for divine worship ; the dispensation to which outward observations were peculiar, having long since given place to the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, we believe the fast we are now called to is not the bowing of the head like a bulrush for a day, but an universal and continual fasting and refraining from every thing which has a tendency to defile the soul and unfit it for becoming the temple of the Holy Ghost, according to the injunctions of Christ to his primitive disciples : " If any man will come after me, let him take up his daily cross and follow me. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things

that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." That the primitive believers saw an end of these shadows of good things, by coming to him in whom all figures and shadows end, is evident by the words of the apostle Paul; "for Christ," said he, "is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. x. 4. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also is he the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. Heb. viii. 6. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Col. ii. 16, 17. And the same apostle thus expostulated with some who it appears had fallen from the true faith in these respects: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years: I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." Gal. iv. 9, 10, 11.

Whilst therefore, it is our earnest concern that we may be found worshippers within the temple, it is affectionately desired that our members may be individually cautious not to give occasion of additional suffering to the truly conscientious amongst us, by any compliance with such observances as our worthy ancestors were rightly concerned to bear testimony against.

ADVISED, that all friends keep to the simplicity of truth, and our ancient testimony, in calling and writing the months and days by scripture names (that is numerical) and not by heathen. 1697.

And that you may the more clearly discern the importance of that Christian testimony borne by our predecessors in this case, we recommend what follows to your serious consideration, viz :

A brief account of the origin of the names of some months of the year, and of all the days of the week, now customarily and commonly used.

I. January was so called from Janus, an ancient king of Italy, whom heathenish superstition had deified, to whom a temple was built and this month dedicated.

II. February was so called from Februa, a word denoting *purgation by sacrifices*; it being usual in this month for the priests of the heathen god Pan to offer sacrifices, and perform certain rites, conducting, as was supposed, to the cleansing or purgation of the people.

III. March was so denominated from Mars, feigned to be the god of war, whom Romulus, founder of the Roman empire, pretended to be his father.

IV. April is generally supposed to derive its name from the Greek appellation of Venus, an imaginary goddess worshipped by the Romans.

V. May is said to have been so called from Maia, the Mother of Mercury, another of their pretended ethnical deities, to whom in this month they paid their devotions.

VI. June is said to take its name from Juno, one of the supposed goddesses of the heathen.

VII. July, so called from Julius Cæsar, one of the Roman emperors, who gave his own name to this month, which before was called Quintilis, or the fifth.

VIII. August, so named in honor of Augustus Cæsar, another of the Roman emperors.—This month was before called Sextilis, or the sixth.

The other four months, namely, September, October, November and December, still retain their numerical Latin names, which, according to the late regulation of the calendar, will for the future be improperly applied. However, from the continued use of them hitherto, as well as from the practice of the Jews before the Babylonish captivity,* it seemeth highly probable, that the method of distinguishing the months by their numerical order only, was the most ancient, as it is the most plain, simple and rational.

As the idolatrous Romans thus gave names to several of the months in honor of their pretended deities; so the like idolatry prevailing among our Saxon ancestors, induced them to call the days of the week by the name of the idol which on that day they peculiarly worshiped. Hence

*See the Scriptures to the time of Ezra.

the First day of the week was by them called Sunday, from their accustomed adoration of the sun upon that day.

The Second day of the week they called Monday, from their usual custom of worshipping the moon on that day.

The Third day of the week they named Tuesday, in honor of one of their idols called Tuisco.

The Fourth day of the week they called Wednesday, from the appellation of Woden, another of their idols.

The Fifth day of the week was called Thursday, from the name of an idol called Thor, to whom they paid their devotions on that day.

The Sixth day of the week was termed Friday, from the name of Friga, an imaginary goddess by them worshipped.

The Seventh day of the week they styled Saturday, as is supposed from Saturn or Seater, by them then worshiped.*

In the ages of Popish superstition, not only the use of such heathenish names and customs was indulged, but also other unsound and unscriptural practices in religion were invented and introduced. For when the profession of the Christian religion became national, multitudes of the heathen priests, whose interest lay in the performance of rights, ceremonies, and sacrifices, embraced prevailing Christianity with selfish views, and labored early, with too much success, to find employment for themselves, by imposing on the peo-

*Sec Verstregan and Sheringham.

ple a new set of ceremonies and sacrifices, bearing some resemblance to those, which in their former state of heathenism they had been accustomed to. From this corrupt source sprang the Popish sacrifice of the mass, the celebration of which, at particular times and on particular occasions, gave rise to the vulgar names of Michaelmas, Martinmas, Christmas, and the like.

Seeing therefore that these appellations and names of days, months, and times, are of an idolatrous or superstitious original, contrary to the divine command, the practice of good and holy men in former ages and repugnant to the Christian testimony borne by our faithful friends and predecessors in the truth, for the sake of which they patiently endured many revilings; let neither the reproach of singularity nor the specious reasonings of such as would evade the cross of Christ, turn you aside from the simplicity of the gospel, nor discourage you from keeping to the language of truth, in denominating the months and days according to the plain and scriptural way of expression, thereby following the example of our worthy elders, and coming up in a noble and honorable testimony against these and all other remains of idolatry and superstition.

From the Meeting for Sufferings in London,
the sixth day of the seventh month, 1751.

DEFAMATION AND DETRACTION.

ADVISED, to watch against all tale-bearing and defaming friends or others, or evil-speaking tending thereunto; and shut out all occasions of offences, contentions and divisions, and to put a speedy stop thereto, passing righteous judgment upon all, who appear instruments of divisions and offences, contrary to that peaceable truth and gospel we profess to be guided by. Be kind and tender hearted one to another, earnestly laboring for universal love, union, and peace in our religious society.

But when any hath received offence from another, let him first speak privately to the party offending, and endeavor reconciliation between themselves, and not to whisper or aggravate matters against one another, behind their backs, to the making of parties, and the breach wider. 1692.

Let those just and ancient commands of God be observed, Levit. xix. 16, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale bearer among thy people:" and Exodus xxiii. 1, "Thou shalt not raise a false report." In the fear of the Lord stand against all whisperers, backbiters, tale-bearers, defamers, and slanderers, and against all whisperings, back-

bitings, tale-bearing, reproaching, and slandering, and put a speedy stop thereto as much as in you lies, for such works of darkness and envy tend to division and discord, and the righteous law of God goes against both the authors, fomenters, receivers and encouragers thereof. 1695.

Be careful to avoid all backbitings, whisperings, and tale-bearings ; for “ The words of a tale-bearer,” says the wise man, “ are as wounds,” Prov. xviii. 8, tending to the defamation and lessening the characters one of another. Be not, therefore, like those of whom the prophet complains, “ Report ” say they “ and we will report ; ” but when you hear a thing tending to the defamation of any, inquire of the reporter, whether he has acquainted the person affected thereby with such a report ; if not, caution him to forbear spreading the same, lest the reputation of the innocent be injured thereby. Endeavor to put a speedy stop to all such wicked practices, and works of darkness, justly condemnable, not only in the authors but the encouragers thereof. “ He that worketh deceit,” says the Royal Psalmist, “ shall not dwell within my house ; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.” Psal. ci. 5, 7. 1738.

We remind you to stand upon your guard against all whispering, backbiting and detracting spirits, who busy themselves in spreading evil surmisings one of another, and to discourage every practice of that nature, observing the advice of the apostle, “ Let all bitterness, wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice ; be ye kind one to an-

other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. iv. 31, 32. Always mindful of the precept of our Lord, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. Mat. viii. 12. 1748.

It is the advice of this meeting, that any person charged with defamation or scandal, ought to be proceeded against in the manner and by the several steps following.

First, the person defamed, or supposed to be defamed, in his own person, or any other to whom the knowledge of the case shall come, to go to the accused and tell him his fault or supposed fault, between them alone, and by the best method he is capable of, to labor to convince him of it, in order to his acknowledgment of the truth and repentance, if he appears to be guilty. But if the accused shall appear, either through ignorance not to apprehend the validity of the proof, or through wilfulness not to yield to it, or being convinced, shall refuse to make such satisfaction as the nature of the case requires, (that being the consequence of true repentance;) in such case the accuser to take with him one or two more of the monthly-meeting the accused belongs to, if it may be conveniently done; and if the accused thinks fit, he may bring with him one or two friends also of the same monthly-meeting, if it may be conveniently done; and they, together, in the wisdom of God, to endeavor to obtain the true knowledge of the case, by hearing witnesses, if there be occasion. And if they all judge him

guilty, and he doth not make satisfaction ; or if they do all not agree that he is innocent ; in either of these cases happening, the person charging is at liberty to bring the matter before the church, who are the only judges now remaining, both of the nature of the fact, and the validity of the proof of it ; and they in the wisdom of God, which we hope will not be wanting to his church, as they humbly wait on him for it, to deal with him for the good ends before mentioned, and as they see cause upon a mature and deliberate consideration, to justify or condemn him. And if the church shall see meet to commit the consideration of a case of this nature, for better dispatch, to certain persons of its own body, we recommend it as our tender advice, in case the accused shall object against one or more of the friends so chosen, that the church have a due regard to such objection, and set aside the person or persons so objected against, and substitute another or others in his or their room, provided such objection doth not extend to the major part of the friends so chosen ; and in general, we desire all tenderness and regard may be had to a person under such circumstances ; and that friends, in a spirit of love and condescension, should be ready to make him as easy as they can, provided they keep up the authority of the meetings.

Nameless books, pamphlets, and papers, reflecting darkly on friends, are testified against ; and it is desired that no such book, pamphlet or paper, be written, printed, published, or privately

handed about, by any under our profession, for the time to come. 1718.

If you hear a report of a friend (to his disadvantage) be careful not to report it again, but go to the person of whom the report is, and inquire if it be true ; then deal with such person for it, according to the doctrine of Christ, Mat. xviii. 16, 17 ; but if false, then endeavor as much as in you lies, to stop such report : For, as Solomon says, “ A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.” Prov. xxii. 1. 1719.

Whereas it may happen, that some friends may suffer much in their reputation and character, by a detracting spirit, which too much prevails among some bearing our name, who shelter themselves under a pretence that they say no more than they have heard from others, but will not discover who they are ; wherefore to prevent this evil of reporting and tale-bearing, it is agreed, that such reporters or tale-bearers shall either discover their authors, or be dealt with, and testified against, as the authors thereof. 1744.

DIFFERENCES AND DISPUTES.

ADVISED, that friends be tender to the principle of God in all, and shun the occasion of vain disputes and janglings, both amongst themselves and others; for this many times is like a blustering wind, that hurts and bruises the tender buds of plants. 1676.

Seeing our comfort as a people, depends upon our care to maintain peace and fellowship amongst brethren, in all our services, we earnestly recommend an humble and condescending frame of spirit unto all; that with godly fear, wisdom and meekness, we may be so ordered in all our respective services, that every high and rough thing may be laid low, that all occasions of striving may be prevented, and the peace of the church of Christ preserved and increased amongst us.

And to this purpose it is tenderly advised, that we diligently and carefully observe the comely and blessed gospel order, so long known and in practice amongst us, in the spirit of meekness and of a sound mind, which is the way to crush all differences in their infancy, and suppress the

rise as well as to stop the progress of every thing that is unseemly, and inconsistent with the testimony of the precious truth. 1699.

Advised that a spirit of love and humility may more and more diffuse itself among us, and influence the hearts of all, so that every one may come to seek peace and pursue it; and that none be apt to take offence; but each in his own particular, be more careful to rectify his own failings and imperfections, than curious in observing, censuring, and aggravating, those of others. This will lead to the exercise of mutual forbearance and forgiveness one of another, by which the occasions of contention will be avoided, and the church preserved in a state of peace and tranquillity. 1736.

DISCIPLINE—AND MEETINGS FOR DISCIPLINE.

ADVISED, that the church's testimony and judgments against disorderly and scandalous walkers, as also the repentance and condemnation of the parties restored, be recorded in a distinct book, in the respective monthly and quarterly-meetings, for the clearing of truth, friends, and our holy profession ; to be produced and published by friends for that end and purpose, so far only as in God's heavenly wisdom they shall see needful.

And it is also our advice, in the love of God, that after any friend's repentance and restoration, he abiding faithful in the truth that condemns the evil, none among you so remember his transgression, as to cast it at him, or upbraid him with it ; for that is not according to the mercies of God. 1675.

Earnestly recommended, whatever your places and stations in the church may be, that in the most weighty and serious manner you often call to remembrance, in all humility of mind, what it was that brought us to be a people, and what is and will be that which will preserve us such :

That the foundation on which a true Christian is built, is the spirit of Christ ; let this therefore direct you in all things, both respecting your private conversation, and whatever you do for God in his church : This is the only true means to preserve you holy and blameless in the one, as well as serviceable and useful in the other ; in this every one will have a single regard to the service that comes before him, in monthly and quarterly meetings, without partiality or respect of persons.

“Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him : Ye shall not respect persons in judgment ; but you shall hear the small as well as the great : You shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God’s.” Deut. i. 16, 17. And in the management of such affairs, they will find their own spirits rightly seasoned and prepared for every work and service to which they may be called ; and all disorderly proceedings, arising from the heat of our own spirits, will thereby be shut out ; and thus the church will be preserved, on her ancient, solid and permanent foundation, to the glory of God, and her own quiet and comfort. 1726.

And in order for the regular and easy proceeding in the service and discipline of the church, meetings have been by divine assistance, as above hinted, set up and established, servicable and subordinate one unto another, as Preparative, consisting of friends belonging to one or more particular meetings for worship : Monthly, consisting

of as many preparatives as may most usefully compose the same : Quarterly, to consist of as many monthly-meetings as are thought useful to constitute the same, to meet together once in three months : Yearly, consisting of all the quarterly-meetings in New-England [except Vermont,] to meet annually, in the sixth month, on Rhode Island, for a great and weighty oversight and Christian care of the affairs of the churches, pertaining to our holy profession and Christian communion ; that good order, true love, unity and concord, may be faithfully followed and maintained among all of us as a peculiar people, called and chosen out of the world, and the errors and corruptions thereof.—And as it hath been experienced, that in those meetings great comfort and satisfaction have been received and enjoyed, when the members have attended them in awe, humility and love, with no other view but the service of God, and the help and assistance one of another ; this meeting doth therefore, in brotherly love, exhort all friends carefully to gather in uprightness and singleness of heart, suitable to our calling, and the dignity of that power, which as we behave wisely and meekly, will preside and govern in all our meetings : This will divest us of partiality and stiffness of opinion, and all high thoughts of ourselves, and raise in us patience and condescension, according to that excellent admonition of our blessed Lord, that he that is greatest among you be your servant.

Agreed that no quarterly-meeting be set up, divided into two, or discontinued, but by the

yearly meeting ; no monthly-meeting, but by the quarterly ; no preparative, or meeting of worship, but by the monthly-meeting, which is the lowest meeting that has the right of disowning members. These meetings are to continue subordinate and accountable, thus : The preparative to the monthly, the monthly to the quarterly, and the quarterly to the yearly-meeting ; so that if at any time the yearly-meeting be dissatisfied with the proceedings of any of the said meetings, or the quarterly meeting with the proceedings of any of the monthly-meetings, or the monthly-meeting with the proceedings of any of the preparative-meetings within its limits, such meetings ought with readiness and meekness to render a satisfactory account accordingly ; and that our records be open to any of our meetings, particular members, and to such others as the respective monthly-meetings may think necessary, for the ascertaining of marriages, births, or other rights.

That each monthly-meeting choose two or more sober and judicious men friends, and two or more women friends, to be overseers in each preparative meeting, which overseers are to render account of their service to the monthly-meeting at least once a quarter, and to be annually appointed or re-chosen.

That there be a sufficient number (at least two) of friends appointed by each monthly-meeting, as representatives to attend the service of the quarterly-meeting to which they belong ; such as are qualified for, and whose business it is to attend to the seasonable despatch and completion of the

same; they taking with them what may be specially committed to them by the monthly-meeting, which should be in writing; and in like manner, the quarterly-meeting is to appoint at least four representatives to the yearly-meeting, who are to make report to the meeting that appoints them, that full endeavors be used in every monthly-meeting to seasonably end all business or cases that come before them; and where any such meeting needs assistance, to the due accomplishment thereof, they apply to superior meetings for their advice, assistance or determination therein, as the nature of the case may require; and in like manner, after due care and endeavors are used, to end any matter before a quarterly-meeting, they apply to the next yearly-meeting.

Let a necessary inquiry be raised in the minds of all the members of the church, who have had any part of the Lord's work upon them, how they have acquitted themselves therein and discharged themselves in the sight of God; forasmuch as a day comes on apace, in which an account of our stewardship will be required at our hands. The discipline of the society, in some places at a low ebb, would again be revived and strengthened, if this awful sense of rendering an account of our trust, and the importance of being clear from the blood of all men, were enough impressed upon all minds. And dear friends, as it is the Lord's work, let it be done as in his sight. Let all our answers to the queries be plain and explicit. Let a due sense of the state of the church prevail on your minds, rather than an unwillingness to appear deficient

among your brethren. May a suitable engagement of mind prevail on all the active members of the church, to acquit themselves with faithfulness, that they may at last receive the crown of righteousness which will never fade away. 1760.

It is the judgment of this meeting, that no person that is out of unity with friends; or under dealing of friends for any miscarriage, ought to be suffered to sit in meetings of business, nor their collections to be received, but be desired to withdraw from such meetings, until such time as they give satisfaction for such their miscarriage. 1706. Revived, 1822.

DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS.

As to subscriptions, collections and donations, for public uses, it is our sense and judgment, they ought to be taken and received from members of our society ; or, in their behalf, of such whose families, or part thereof, are members, and no others : except such donations, &c. be made in and by a last will and testament.

E D U C A T I O N.

ADVISED that friends who are in ability, and have the prosperity of truth at heart, would in the education of their children take care, as suitable opportunities and occasions may offer, to let them be instructed in some modern tongues, as French, High and Low Dutch, Danish, &c. that so when they are grown up, as it shall please the Lord to dispose and incline them, they may be of service to the church. 1737.

As the right education of children, and the nurture of youth, are of very great consequence to them and to the succeeding generation, we pressingly exhort all parents, and heads of families, to procure such useful learning for their children as their abilities will admit; and to encourage them, as well by example as precept, to the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures; and that they begin as early as possible to instil into their tender minds the principles of truth and virtue; and instruct them in the nature and necessity of being born from above, without which, our Lord declared, no man shall see the kingdom of God; and, in order hereunto, that they labor to bring them acquainted with the holy seed, which is

sown by the divine hand in every heart, for that gracious end; that they may, through the Lord's blessing of such pious and paternal endeavors, be induced to place their affections upon it, and cleaving thereto in faithful obedience, come to experience it to be unto them Christ within, the hope of their glory.

The importance of an early instruction in the law of God, is set forth with peculiar strength, clearness and solemnity, in Deut. vi. 4 &c.—“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” It is requisite also that restraint be added to instruction, it being much easier, as well as more prudent, to be exercised upon the first appearances of an inclination to dangerous or hurtful liberties than afterwards; for where children, through the prevalence of fond affection, have been accustomed to improper indulgencies, when they are grown to such a dangerous degree of ripeness, that the exertion of authority hath become absolutely necessary, the strength of their passions, so habituated, hath often proved unconquerable, or very difficult to overcome, to the great hurt of the unhappy youth, and the unspeakable grief of the imprudently indulgent parents. 1760.

FAMILIES.

FORASMUCH as a godly care is growing among friends in many places, that all things which are unsavory and hurtful may be removed, so that all who profess the precious truth with us, may come up together in the good order of the gospel, for the furthering of which, and encouraging thereto, it is recommended that weighty and sensible friends, of unblameable conversation, be chosen in the wisdom of God to visit the families of friends in his love ; and they are desired to advise and admonish, in the peaceable spirit of truth, as occasion may offer. 1708.

And we beseech you, brethren, let the tender advice of such as shall undertake so brotherly an office meet with a kind and open reception, that in the mutual giving and receiving of wholesome counsel and advice, you may co-operate to the help and furtherance of each other's faith, and the reviving our ancient Christian testimony. 1752.

Let the Christian duty of visiting the sick be timely remembered and practiced, it having often

left comfort, ease and sweetness upon the spirits of many to their very end. 1710.

A weighty concern being livingly impressed on our minds in this meeting, that good service may arise from visiting the families of our brethren, by rightly concerned friends, we are engaged to recommend it to the sensible members of the body, and to monthly and quarterly-meetings, to feel deeply after the pointings of truth; and that as this divine principle opens their way, they may promote this useful service in their respective meetings, by appointing suitable friends, of either or both sexes, who are desired to proceed therein in the love of the gospel, and under the tendering influence thereof; which we have good cause to hope may thus be attended with beneficial effects to the visited, and with solid satisfaction, and additional experience in the work of truth, to those who may be engaged therein. 1773.

FREE-MASONS.



As to the consistency of the members of our society joining themselves in the meetings or public entertainments of those called free-masons, we have deliberated upon, and, according to our present judgment, think it not consistent with our religious profession ; and advise that quarterly and monthly-meetings dissuade their members therefrom : and if any do join therewith, contrary to the advice herein contained, that they be dealt with.

GAMING AND DIVERSIONS.

As our time passeth swiftly away, and our delight ought to be in the law of the Lord ; it is advised that a watchful care be exercised over our youth, to prevent their going to stage-plays, horse-races, music, dancing, or any such vain sports and pastimes, and being concerned in lotteries, wagering, or other species of gaming. And if any of our members fall into either of these practices, and cannot be prevailed upon, by private labor, to decline them, the monthly-meeting to which such belong, should be informed thereof, and if they be not reclaimed by further labor, proceed to testify our disunity with them.

HIRELING MINISTRY, AND THEIR WORSHIP-HOUSES.

OUR ancient testimony against an hireling ministry, or any contributions to the maintenance and support thereof, being founded on the example and precepts of our Lord, and his primitive followers and disciples ; it is the sense of this meeting, that friends be careful to support the same, by a faithful testimony against contributing towards their salaries, by tax or otherwise, and against the building or repairing their meeting houses.

L A W.

WHEREAS some persons professing with us, have proved so base and unworthy, as when they have run themselves into debt, to remove themselves or their effects, to prevent justice; whereby those creditors, who are friends, have been deprived of an opportunity of the common method of friends, specified in the minute of 1697, respecting arbitrations; it is hereby declared, that the last paragraph of said minute, which prohibits friends to sue or arrest one another, is not intended to prevent such evil persons in those practices from being dealt with by a legal process, as the nature of the case may require: Of which circumstance the monthly and quarterly-meetings are the proper judges; so it is not doubted but they will do justice to the parties concerned therein. And this meeting doth request every monthly-meeting to appoint and depute proper persons out of their several meetings, for such friends as have occasion, to advise with, in the intervals of monthly-meetings, and if they see cause, to give liberty to recover as above. 1720.

And as it may happen that by sudden losses or unforeseen accidents, or otherwise, a friend may be reduced, and unable to pay all just debts, and his creditors falling suddenly upon him by suits or attachments, foreclose a due proportion of a just debt due to a friend, if the advice specified in the minute of 1697, respecting arbitrations, be strictly attended to ; it is therefore to be understood, that in all such sudden or extraordinary occasions, friends are left to their liberty to secure their just debts in a legal manner ; provided they, in all cases, submit the attachment to come into a general average, upon a just settlement with all the other equitable demands, and to receive their dividends according to their demands with all the rest.

LIBERALITY TO THE POOR.

It is desired that such among friends as are endowed with plenty of outward substance, be timely and tenderly advised to do good therewith, in their day and generation, especially with regard to the poor; that the tokens of your charity may commend your memorial, and be good precedents to generations to come. 1696.

We find ourselves at this time engaged to request, that where provisions and the necessaries of life are dear and scarce, or sickness doth remarkably afflict, friends would in proportion to such scarcity and affliction, exert their charitable assistance to the poor, which is our christian duty, as stewards of the mercies wherewith the Lord has intrusted us. 1729.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men.” “Warn those that are rich in this world, that they trust not in uncertain riches,” nor apply them to the indulging their appetites in pleasure and vanity; but that they be “ready to do good, and to communicate” to the relief of those who are in necessity.

The principal if not the only satisfaction a man of a truly Christian disposition can have, in the affluence and increase of the things of this world, must arise from the opportunities put into his hands, and the doing good therewith. 1741.

LOVE AND UNITY.

It is our earnest desire, that above all, friends hold fervent charity in the body, that will keep the members together in a blessed concord and communion, which is esteemed by the apostle the more excellent way, excelling other gifts, which pass away ; but charity, that is the love of God (from which our Christian and brotherly affection springs) shall endure forever : This envieth not, vaunteth not, boasteth not itself, and seeketh not its own ; but is patient, beareth all things, suffereth all things, and watcheth not with an evil eye, no, nor thinketh ill, but is kind ; in which blessed love, dear friends, hold your fellowship one with another, which was the character of the primitive Christians. 1705.

Among the gospel precepts, we find not any thing more strongly and frequently recommended by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, to the primitive believers, than that they should love one another : And as we are sensible, that nothing will contribute more to the peace and prosperity of the church, than a due regard to this advice, so we earnestly desire that it may be the care and concern of all friends every where, to dwell there-

in, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to maintain love, concord and peace, in and among all the churches of Christ. 1730.

By accounts received, it appears that, in general, love and concord are maintained, and that friends in divers places are under an earnest concern for the promotion of peace, and for the suppressing and guarding against every occasion of strife and discord, tending to divide and scatter the flock of Christ: For strengthening this concern, and promoting this Christian disposition of love, wheresoever it appears, we remind you of the benefits thereof, expressed in Psalm cxxxiii. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Be ye also mindful of the saying of our blessed Lord himself, John xiii. 35; "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." 1752.

MARRIAGE.



IT is advised, that parents exercise a religious care in watching over their children and endeavor to guard them against improper or unequal connections in marriage ; that they be not anxious to obtain for them large portions and settlements, but that they be joined with persons of religious inclinations, suitable dispositions, and diligence in their business, which are necessary to a comfortable life in a married state.

And it is particularly recommended to all parents, to endeavor to cultivate such habits of confidence and freedom in the truth, with their children, as may render it easy for them early to consult their parents in such important concerns.

It is advised, that all young and unmarried persons in membership with us, previously to their making any proceedure in order to marriage, do seriously and humbly wait upon the Lord for his counsel and direction in this important concern, and when favored with satisfactory clearness therein, they should early acquaint their parents or guardians with their intentions, and wait for their con-

sent ; thus preservation from the dangerous bias of forward, brittle and uncertain affections, would be experienced, to the real benefit of the parties, and the comfort of their friends.

And it is earnestly recommended to friends, that they tenderly and carefully watch over the youth, and extend seasonable caution and admonition, as occasion may require.

The breaches of our testimony in going from amongst us, in the weighty engagement of marriage, being often for want of due care in parents, and those who have the important charge of educating the youth under their trust, early to admonish and instruct them in the principles of truth, and impress their minds with the duty of religiously observing them ; as much as possible restraining them from such company as is likely to entangle their affections in an improper manner ; we therefore tenderly advise friends to an increasing care over the youth, that the consistency of our principles in all respects with the nature of true religion, may be impressed upon their tender minds, by upright examples, as well as by precepts ; and that where there is apparent danger of the affections of any being improperly entangled, and the care of parents and guardians, or those who have the oversight, appears not sufficient to prevent their taking imprudent steps in the accomplishment of marriage, care be taken, timely to apply for the help of their friends.

And it is further advised, that after parents and guardians have suffered their children to engage one another in affections, they do not break off upon

any worldly account, but that they wait upon and seek the Lord for their children, in proposals of marriage, before they give any encouragement thereunto.

It is agreed, that no monthly-meeting permit any marriages to be proposed in the said meeting, sooner than one year after the decease of former husband or wife ; and we think it most advisable, that no such proposals be made between the parties within that time.

It is our sense and judgment, that not only those marriages of near kindred, expressly forbidden under the law, ought not to be practiced under the gospel ; but that we in our day ought not to take first cousins in marriage, being called to that spiritual dispensation which gives dominion over the affections, and leads to those marriages which are more natural, and of better report. And if any, notwithstanding, shall marry contrary to this rule, being previously cautioned and advised against it, that the monthly-meeting where such belong give forth a testimony against them, and not receive such into unity again until they are well assured that they have found a place for repentance, and are received in the truth.

The subject of marrying in the kindred by affinity, having been brought under the view of this meeting, received its solid and deliberate consideration ; and it is concluded that the construction of our yearly-meeting, as particularly defined in the year 1773, [namely, that our members be not allowed to marry a deceased wife's sister, or a deceased

husband's brother,] shall hereafter be considered as the construction to be given to our present Discipline. 1830.

The prudent and christian care that has been maintained amongst us, in relation to marriage, ever since we were a people, having obtained a good report, it is become afresh the concern of this meeting that the reputation of our religious society, and the cause of truth herein, may still be kept up ; and that not only the several weighty advices of this meeting, in respect to the proceedings of the parties concerned, and the conduct of their parents and guardians, may be observed, but likewise that as little diversity as may be, may appear amongst us, in regard to the form and manner of solemnization.

For the accomplishment of marriage, it is advised, that the parties should inform the men's and women's monthly-meeting to which the woman belongs, of their intentions, through the Preparative meeting, when convenient. And at a proper time they should make it known in both meetings, either by a written communication signed by both parties, or by verbal declaration, that "With Divine permission, and friends' approbation, they intend marriage with each other : " whereupon two friends in each meeting, (if both the parties belong to the same meeting,) should be appointed by minute to make the necessary inquiries respecting the clearness to proceed in marriage, of the party or parties who shall be members of said monthly-meeting. If the parties have parents or guardians present, their consent should be expressed ; or if the man is a member of another monthly-meeting, the consent of his parents

or guardians, if he have any, should be produced in writing, with a certificate from his monthly-meeting, of his clearness, either then or at the next meeting. If the woman be a widow, having children, two or more friends should be appointed, to see that the rights of her children are legally secured. At the next meeting, if the committees report that careful inquiry has been made, and that they have consent of parents, where it has not been before manifested, and the parties appear clear to proceed in marriage with each other, the meeting is to leave them at liberty to accomplish their marriage according to our rules, and appoint two friends of each sex, to attend and see that good order is observed, that a certificate be prepared, and after being signed by the parties at their marriage, be audibly read, and that a sufficient number of witnesses be thereto subscribed. It is further advised that the said marriage be accomplished decently, gravely, and weightily; and that the parties themselves, their parents and others concerned, do take care at the houses or places where they go after the meeting is over, that all behave with becoming sobriety; and the said overseers are to make report to the next monthly-meeting, and take care that the marriage certificate be recorded.

It is advised to solemnize our marriages at the usual week-day meeting, to which the woman belongs, or at the close of a monthly-meeting in a public meeting of men and women friends, unless circumstances may induce the monthly-meeting to permit it otherwise; it being understood that the

parties are to be present at the monthly-meeting when permission is granted them to consummate their marriage, if it be their intention to accomplish it at the close of said meeting.

Monthly-meetings are at liberty, when they think any peculiarity of circumstances, of either of the parties proposing marriage, warrant a deviation from our general practice, to shorten the time of their receiving their answer, by adjourning a monthly-meeting; having especial care, that the time for inspecting the clearness of the parties, be not less than two weeks from their making their proposals, and receiving the meeting's answer.

FORM OF A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.

[As near as circumstances will admit.]

Whereas, A. B. of ————, son of D. and E. B. of ————, in the county of ———— and state of ————, and S. T. daughter of M. and M. T. of ————, in the county of ———— have declared their intentions of taking each other in marriage, to ———— monthly-meeting of the Society of Friends, held in ————, according to the good order used among them; and their proceedings, after due inquiry and deliberate consideration thereof, being allowed by the said meeting; they appearing clear of all others, and having consent of parents (or guardians) ———— concerned.

Now these are to certify to all whom it may concern, that for the full accomplishing of their said intentions, this ———— day of the ———— month in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ————, they, the said A. B. and S. T. appeared

at a religious meeting of the aforesaid society in ———; and he the said A. B. taking the said S. T. by the hand, did openly declare as followeth: “In the presence of this assembly I take this my friend S. T. to be my wife, promising, through Divine assistance, to be unto her a faithful and affectionate husband, until death shall separate us.”— And the said S. T. did then and there declare in like manner as followeth: “In the presence of this assembly I take this my friend A. B. to be my husband, promising, through Divine assistance, to be unto him a faithful and affectionate wife, until death shall separate us.” Or words of the like import.

And the said A. B. and S. T. as a further confirmation thereof, have hereunto set their hands: She, after the custom of marriage, adopting the name of her husband.

A. B.

S. B.

And we, whose names are hereunto subscribed, being present at the solemnization of their said marriage, have set our hands as witnesses thereunto, the day and year above written.

Agreed that it be recommended, that according to the ancient practice among friends, they take care that such men and women friends as do make suit or concern themselves in proposals of marriage, one to the other, do not dwell in the same house, from the time they begin to be concerned, until their marriage.

This meeting having deliberately considered the great exercise brought upon our society, by divers in profession with us, who are joined in marriage contrary to our known principles, and the wholesome discipline established among us, with persons either of our own or other persuasions, doth earnestly advise that all friends use their utmost endeavors to prevent such marriages, whensoever the parties' inclinations may come to their knowledge.

And it is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that where any do marry, contrary to the established rules of the society, they should be dealt with in a spirit of Christian love and tenderness, agreeable to our known discipline.

Monthly-meetings are authorized, if the case require it, to disown such parents or guardians, as encourage the marriages of their children and those under their care (members of our religious society) contrary to the good order established amongst us, if after Christian and brotherly labor with them, they cannot be brought to a due sense of their error, and a satisfactory acknowledgement of the same.

We also recommend the good order of friends relating to marriage, that it be carefully preserved and duly maintained in the first and earliest proceedings leading thereunto, as well as the orderly solemnization thereof; and if any persons, contrary to the repeated advice and established order of friends, shall, under any pretence whatsoever, presume to take one another in any meeting for worship, without the consent of the monthly-meeting to which they belong, such proceeding being of a clandestine na-

ture, tending to make void the just care of friends in that case, we advise that the monthly-meeting do not fail to testify against the practice, as well as against the persons concerned therein. 1730.

MASTERS, MISTRESSES, AND SERVANTS.

ADVISED, that servants professing the truth behave themselves in due subjection, humility and plainness, as becomes their profession and places: And likewise, that masters and mistresses behave themselves toward their servants according to the apostle's direction. Eph. vi. 5, 6, 9. Col. iv, 1. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Titus ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19, 20. 1703.

A religious care is recommended toward our servants, that all appearance of pride, idleness and vain conversation, in them, may be discouraged; and that they may be exhorted to attend first and week-day meetings, and have a sense of God's love upon their spirits, and therein partake with us of the sweetness of truth; and in the discharge of their duty to God, and to their masters and mistresses, know peace in themselves. 1718.

And it is further advised, that all parents and masters of families do use their utmost care and endeavors to keep their youth duly to meetings, and to prevent the indecent straggling abroad of their children and servants, especially on the first days, and other times allowed them to attend meetings, and to keep them out of all tumultuous crowds or gatherings of rude people. 1726.

MEETING-HOUSES.

ADVISED, that friends, in the several quarterly and monthly-meetings, take special care that the titles of friends' meeting-houses and burial-grounds be made secure, according to law. 1703.

It having been represented to us, that in divers parts losses have been sustained by our society, by not timely looking into and securing the titles of meeting-houses, burial-grounds, and charitable bequests; we have to recommend to quarterly and monthly-meetings, to make timely and careful inspection into what hands and trusts the same are secured; and if they find occasion, by the death of any friend or otherwise, to add some others to the trust, or make any alteration, so that friends may not be deprived of the benefit of such meeting-houses, burial-grounds, and charitable bequests; and that the quarterly and monthly-meetings keep exact records of all such trusts and conveyances. 1737.

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS.

THIS meeting being under a weighty concern for friends who are or may be under sufferings and difficulties, on account of our religious testimony, doth appoint a meeting for sufferings, consisting of not less than twenty-five members, who are desired, with diligence, caution and due care, to proceed in such weighty matters as may come before them, humbly waiting for the influence of divine wisdom to direct their minds from time to time, so that their results may tend to their own peace, and welfare of our religious society. They are desired to take cognizance of all grievances arising amongst us, wherein any friend or friends may be affected in his person or property, or in regard to our Christian testimony, to advise, counsel and assist, as best wisdom may direct : and any aggrieved friend or friends may apply to them, either in a collective or separate capacity, as the circumstances of the case may require.

That the said meeting view manuscripts proposed to be printed, and correspond with the meetings for sufferings or yearly-meetings of London, Philadelphia, or elsewhere, to represent the

state of the affairs of friends here, or as occasion may require ; and in general to represent this meeting in all cases where the reputation and interest of truth and our religious society are concerned, provided they do not meddle with matters of faith and discipline not already determined in the yearly-meeting : And that at least there be ten members present to constitute a meeting, who should concur on all occasions, and that in matters of great importance notice be given, as far as may be to all the members. The said meeting is to draw on the treasury of this meeting in its recess, for the money lodged therein, from time to time as occasion may require ; being accountable for the same, and keeping records of all their proceedings, which are annually to be laid before this meeting, or such committee as it may appoint to inspect or view the same. 1775, 1776, 1783.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP.

As it hath been our care and practice from the beginning, that an open testimony for the Lord should be borne, and a public standard for truth and righteousness upheld in the power and spirit of God, by our open and known meetings, against the spirit of persecution, that in all ages hath sought to lay waste God's heritage; and as only through faithfulness, constancy and patience, victory hath been and is obtained; so it is our advice and judgment, that all friends gathered in the name of Jesus, keep up these public testimonies in their respective places, and not decline, forsake or remove their public assemblies, because of times of sufferings, as worldly, fearful and politic professors have done, because of informers and the like persecutors; for such practices are not consistent with the nobility of truth, and therefore not to be owned in the church of Christ. 1675.

Let every one be watchful against an earthly spirit, for that will choke the good seed, and bring forth a slighting or neglecting your testimony in your first-day and week-day meetings, and bring a decay of your strength and zeal for God, and his truth, and bring a weakness upon you, by reason whereof you will not be able to stand in an hour of temptation. 1689.

Agreed that friends that live distant from meetings be reminded to keep meetings in their families, to wait upon God, that their children and families may come to be seasoned in their spirits by the truth and the Lord's power, and that they may have his blessing upon their families. 1696.

Advised that all friends be careful to attend meetings for worship and business, at the times and hours appointed, and not to detain meetings out of season. 1715.

Advised that friends keep their children to a constant, seasonable and orderly frequenting, as well of week-day as of first-day meetings, instructing them to have their minds stayed in the divine gift, to wait upon the Lord therein, to receive a portion of his spiritual favor ; that they, from the tendering virtue of the Holy Spirit, may be engaged in heart and mind to walk worthy of so great a grace, and in a holy zeal to honor God, submit to bear the cross, endure the shame, and become public witnesses for him amongst the sons of men. 1723.

And we earnestly exhort that you hold fast the profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, without wavering, both in respect to his outward coming in the flesh, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, mediation and intercession at the right hand of the Father : and to the inward manifestation of his grace and Holy Spirit in our hearts, powerfully working in the soul of man, to the subduing of every evil affection and lust, and to the purifying of our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God ; that through the virtue and

efficacy of this most holy faith, ye may become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, which will enable you to worship God in spirit with acceptance, and preserve you in a lively frame of mind, from a drowsy and lukewarm spirit, which in all our religious assemblies, ought to be guarded against with the utmost care and circumspection. In this lively faith and pure life of Christ you will have victory over the world, over your desires after the grandeur and perishing things thereof, and over all corrupt customs and fashions, which are contrary to the purity of the gospel, and our ancient Christian testimony. 1736.

The importance of steadfastly maintaining our ancient principles, respecting the doctrines of the Gospel, coming renewedly under our consideration, we earnestly recommend and enjoin upon quarterly and monthly - meetings, and upon all faithful friends, to be watchful over our members, as it regards the profession of their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, both as to his outward coming in the flesh, wherein he tasted death for every man, and was the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, suffering the just for the unjust, that we might be brought unto God through Him ;—and to his spiritual appearance in the heart, for “unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.” And if in any instance there should be manifested any deviation from our Christian principles in these respects, that they proceed to labor with such in the spirit of meekness and wis-

dom, endeavoring to bring them to a sense of their departure from our acknowledged principles, that if possible they may be restored to soundness of faith. And if there should be any who should persist in their errors, notwithstanding such labor in brotherly love, that our testimony be maintained by testifying against such. 1829.

In all your religious meetings for the worship of Almighty God, let your minds be seasoned with an awful sense of real and true devotion, and be ye exemplary to the flock of Christ. Let the solemn gravity of your deportment be such as may demonstrate to others, that you are in earnest in the great duty of waiting upon and worshipping God in spirit; that serious and tender-hearted inquirers may be encouraged to come and partake in your assemblies of that inward and spiritual consolation and refreshment, which the Lord is graciously pleased to impart to the souls of such as are humbled in his sight, and approach his holy presence with reverence and fear. 1744.

Take care, we beseech you, in this day of ease and liberty, lest a spirit of lukewarmness and indifferency prevail over you, to the stopping up the streams of the water of life, and rendering you like a barren heath in the desert, which knoweth not when good comes. We entreat you to be especially watchful in this behalf that an indolent and sluggish disposition appear not among you to the stumbling of such serious inquirers as may attend our meetings, in expectation of that life and power, which the observation of your indifference and unconcernedness may give them too

just cause to suspect that ye yourselves are strangers to. 1741.

Let not the smallness of your numbers discourage you from constantly attending those meetings, inasmuch as the words of Christ remain unchangeably true and steadfast, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Mat. xviii. 20. But it hath been justly observed, that where remissness and neglect of attending meetings for worship have prevailed, it hath been too often an inlet to further declension, and such other undue liberties as truth and its guidance do by no means admit of.

We therefore tenderly exhort such as, through fear of neglecting their temporal concerns, or other considerations, are kept from a due attendance of these meetings, seriously to consider that gracious promise left upon record: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Some of us have to testify, by blessed experience, that our affairs have not suffered by giving up our time, the few hours set apart for religious worship; but on the contrary, our minds have been thereby greatly strengthened to come up with propriety in the duties we owe to God, to our families, and to all mankind. 1758.

As it hath pleased divine goodness clearly to manifest amongst us the way of life and salvation, and to instruct us where and how to wait for him, prize, we beseech you, these precious privileges; keep all your meetings in the name of the Lord, and let your minds be established in a humble

waiting upon him with reverence and fear ; so shall strength be added to strength, and being more closely united to him, you will experience the indwelling of his blessed spirit. 1761.

When gathered in your religious assemblies, be truly concerned to retire to the divine and heavenly gift, which will minister to every state and condition though you may have no outward teaching, and will direct you to wait, without being restless or uneasy, till it be a proper time to break up your meeting with that decency and solemnity which should attend our minds in such service [1755] : And be not apt, as the manner of some is, at the close of your meetings, hastily to enter into discourses about the affairs of this life, much less the vain amusements thereof ; a practice inconsistent with the Christian gravity which at such times ought, in a special manner, to season the minds of persons so lately assembled for the worship of God, in spirit and in truth. 1748.

Persons professing with us, who absent themselves from our religious meetings, either on the first or other days of the week, and disregard the repeated advice and endeavors of friends to stir them up to this necessary duty, are to be dealt with by the monthly-meeting to which they belong, even to disowning such, if the case requires it. 1770.

MINISTERS AND ELDERS, AND MEETING OF MINISTERS AND ELDERS.

It is recommended that one or more faithful friend or friends, of either or both sexes, be appointed out of each particular meeting as standing elders by the monthly-meeting, whose duty is to help young ministers, and give advice to all others as occasion may require ; to encourage our youth and others in virtue, and in a reverent and early attention to and belief in the divine appearance and operation of the spirit of Christ in their own hearts, and in a venerable esteem of the Holy Scriptures, and a frequent reading and meditating therein ; and to that plainness, moderation and simplicity, which is becoming our holy profession ; to stir up those who are or may be deficient in the due attendance of our meetings, and in general to watch over the flock of Christ ; being themselves examples in faith, meekness and charity. 1709, 1728, 1760.

As these are officers of the church at large, let the monthly-meeting, after they have approved such as they adjudge duly anointed and qualified for that service, acquaint the quarterly-meeting therewith, who after solidly waiting for their concurring unity, and finding nothing to hinder, are

to minute the same, and acquaint the select-meeting thereof; who are also to enter the appointment and concurrence on their minutes, and the friends so appointed may then sit in any of our meetings of ministers and elders. And information of such appointments is to be given by the quarterly and select-meetings, to their respective yearly-meetings, and their names when approved to be also entered on the yearly-meeting's record. And where any friend appearing in public ministry, whose conversation be clean and blameless, and the elders of the monthly-meeting he or she belongs to, are convinced that the Lord hath called them to that weighty work, after duly waiting for due proof thereof, they signify their unity with his or her gift in the ministry to the monthly-meeting, who after weightily feeling after the mind of truth therein, and being united in approving him or her as a minister in the church, the same be entered and sent forward, in like manner as in the case of elders.

The ministers and elders so approved, within the compass of each monthly-meeting (or where the quarterly-meeting should think best to unite the members of two or more meetings in one) meet by themselves once in three months, and after solidly waiting to feel their minds seasoned with the virtue of truth, are to proceed to read and consider the queries, and how their purport is answered by their members; tenderly advising and assisting one another as the nature of the case may require; and form such answers to the queries as are agreeable to their states, which are to

be signed by their clerk, and two or more friends are to be appointed as representatives, who are to take the answers, and assembling together previous to and at the place of holding the quarterly-meeting, do, with the assistance of other select members within the compass of each quarter, compose a select quarterly-meeting, where the queries are again to be read, and the state of the meeting inquired into, and such advice and assistance afforded the lower meetings thereto belonging, by advice or committees, as occasion may require. And once a year preceding the yearly-meeting, general answers in writing to be drawn up and transmitted to the yearly select-meeting, by representatives to be appointed to attend the same ; where the state of all the several quarters and their members are to be attended to, and such help afforded, and in such way and manner, as they in the wisdom of truth may think proper, in subordination to our Christian discipline ; preserving records of their proceedings, and annually choosing or re-appointing a clerk, which the quarterly and monthly select-meetings are all advised to do.

And it is agreed, that the quarterly select-meeting be held the day before each quarterly-meeting, at the same place, at the eleventh hour ;* and that the yearly select meeting begin at New-

*There are exceptions as to the hour in several of our quarterly meetings.

port, the ninth hour, on the day before the yearly-meeting.

This meeting desires that you, whom the Lord hath gifted with a public testimony for his name and truth, may be careful to attend to the motions of truth, and in it be diligent to visit the heritage of God in their meetings, and especially those least frequented. 1695.

We farther entreat you, that in all your religious meetings, appointed for the worship of Almighty God, you wait in humble reverence for the influence of the word of life; be cautious not to move, in acts of devotion, in your own will; set not forward self to work, but patiently attend and wait for the gift and enlivening power of the Divine Spirit, without which your performances will be unacceptable, and like those of old, of which it was said, "Who hath required this at your hand?" Isaiah i. 12. 1742.

As we are fully persuaded that the ministry of the gospel is not received of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, according to that apostolical direction, "as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified: And as this ministry is divine, the motives and inducements thereunto are perfectly disinterested, and no way mercenary and lucrative, but concurrent with the precept Christ

gave to his apostles, and immediate followers, "Freely ye have received, freely give." 1771.

Friends, in their respective meetings, are earnestly desired and advised to use prudence and caution, so as not to be imposed upon by cheats, or impostors, pretending to ministry or otherwise; and where there is a doubt or question concerning the ministry of any persons, in that case let such be called upon to shew what certificate they have; and in general it is recommended to the monthly and quarterly-meetings, to see that friends who travel in the work of the ministry, do go in the unity of the meetings to which they belong, and with certificates therefrom; and further, that it may become the tender care of the said meetings to watch over such as may be young in the ministry, to see that they walk humbly and wisely: That as on the one hand, nothing truly tending to the glory of God, and the edification of his church and people, may be discouraged; so on the other, where any thing appears which may make advice necessary, that the elders of the church, both ministers and others, do, in the wisdom of God, give their advice thereupon, with due regard to the state of weakness and childhood that such may be in. 1720.

And we do in much love caution those friends who are rightly concerned in the work of the ministry, to watch over their own spirits, and not to be over hasty or censorious in passing judgment respecting the state of those who hear them; but to manifest that, in the exercise of their ministry, they are led by the love of God; and that their

principal aim is, that they may be instrumental to administer spiritual consolation and strength to the churches where they come.

Farther we earnestly exhort that none would offer to impose themselves as preachers, in any meeting of friends, who are not themselves faithful against the payment of priests' wages, and in observing the other branches of our Christian testimony. 1745.

We tenderly and with earnestness advise all friends, who travel in the work of the ministry, as well as others, that they not only shut their ears against all private information of persons and things, tending to the defamation of particular persons or families, and to stir up disputes and contentions in meetings for discipline; but also to rebuke and reprove the person or persons, who shall attempt to prejudice their minds with any private information of that nature. 1752.

The spirit of God being the foundation of all true knowledge and experience, both in ministers and hearers, we earnestly exhort that all would diligently wait upon and mind it: Ministers, in their public services especially, ought always to attend closely to their several and peculiar gifts, and minister the word faithfully as it is manifested and revealed to them; observing a decent and modest behavior in the exercise of their ministry, and not entangling themselves with the affairs of this life, that they may the better answer the holy warfare in which they are engaged. And let the hearers be watchful over their own spirits, and not forwardly judge or censure the testimonies which

may be delivered amongst them; for if they be not very careful and diligent in attending upon the Lord in meetings, they are liable to mistake in the judgment they may pass on the ministry.

Now this being a matter of great moment, for the preservation of love and concord in the churches; and knowing the danger and ill consequences which attend a hasty and censorious judging of the ministry, we think it necessary to caution friends not to let their own spirits sway them, but let the spirit of God rule and reign in their hearts; for this will preserve all in sweetness and tenderness one towards another: The due observance of which will be a great help to ministers in the discharge of their duty, and the service to which they are called.

And we earnestly request, that the elders in monthly and quarterly-meetings would be ready to help and inform the weak, when suitable opportunities present; and that both ministers and hearers, pursuing one and the same end, namely, the glory of God, and the good and welfare one of another, the church may be edified, increase and flourish, to the consolation of the faithful.

On the other hand, we advise ministers to have it very much at heart, to maintain a perfect harmony and good understanding with the monthly-meetings to which they belong; that as the said meetings may sometimes find themselves concerned to advise them, respecting their conduct in meetings, or otherwise, they shew themselves ready to hear and receive advice, as well as to teach and instruct.

We further advise all monthly-meetings, to take great care in giving certificates to those who travel, to prevent the uneasiness which sometimes falls on the church, from a weak and unskilful ministry; and let the elders, when they see occasion, advise ministers to be very prudent in their conduct, not as busy bodies, nor meddling with family or personal affairs, in which they are not concerned, or required to be assisting; that they be very tender of one another's reputation, and of that of friends among whom they travel; neither giving ear to, nor spreading reports, tending to raise in the minds of others a lessening or disesteem of any of the brotherhood; and as soon as their service in the ministry is over, that they return to their habitations, and there take a reasonable and prudent care of their own business, household and family. 1731.

Our blessed Lord, just before his ascension, commanded his disciples to wait at Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high; knowing their inability, without the sensible feeling of that power, to speak in his name for the conversion of the nations. It was this power that enabled them to speak boldly in the name of Jesus. This alone that made them able ministers of Christ; whose preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.

And seeing many of us have experienced much spiritual consolation, by waiting in silence and humbly depending upon the Lord alone, we exhort friends, that when met together for religious

worship, they labor to feel their minds abstracted from visible objects, into a true stillness and nothingness of self; wherein the teachings of the Holy Spirit are witnessed by humble and contrite souls.

In such a waiting state, you will have a true relish and savor of the ministry of those who are rightly concerned by the same spirit, to labor in word and doctrine among you. 1738.

We earnestly caution and entreat all such among you as find themselves concerned, in Christian love to exhort and admonish others, that they be especially careful of their own conduct: that by circumspect walking in all holiness of life and conversation, they may become living examples of the purity and excellence of the advices they recommend. 1748.

You that are elders and overseers in the church, and concerned in the maintainance of good order and preservation of discipline, keep your own hands clean, and garments unspotted, that you may rebuke with authority, and being clothed with the meekness and gentleness of the Lamb, may steadfastly persevere in the support of that testimony committed to you, that when the Great Shepherd shall appear, you may come before him with reverent assurance, and receive the reward of "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." 1753.

As to the elders among you, and such whom God, having endued with knowledge and experience of the cleansing operations of his Spirit, hath concerned to minister to others, let them adorn

the doctrine of the gospel, by shewing, out of a good conversation, their works with meekness of wisdom : Such as these, being clothed with humility, and exemplary to the flock whom they feed ; not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; are worthy of double honor, and to be highly esteemed in the church of Christ. 1751.

As the Lord is graciously pleased effectually to touch the hearts of many of the youth, and prepare them for the reception of his heavenly gifts, whereby many are called to the work of the ministry ; and well knowing it is a due attention to the gift, and waiting for the heavenly power and life to discharge themselves therein, which has ever proved a blessing to the particular, and the churches in general ; we earnestly recommend, that the elders and sensible solid friends do watch over such in a holy concern for their and the churches' good ; that the weak and tender may be encouraged in a faithful discharge of their duty, and where a forward spirit appears, that would lead into many words out of the power and life, such may be properly admonished in the meekness of wisdom, that each may speak the language of truth, by the ability which the Lord only gives ; and that the monthly-meetings do not indulge any to travel and appoint meetings too soon, for many have been hurt thereby. 1753.

We recommend the apostolic advice, " Lay hands on no man suddenly," for we have cause to believe, that injurious encouragement hath tended to promote an unsound ministry in some places.

It is therefore recommended, that the approved ministers and elders, in the several monthly-meetings, would tenderly advise those who come forth in public testimony, to wait patiently under a deep consideration of their state of infancy and childhood, without desiring to be introduced into the meeting of ministers and elders, until their fruits afford sufficient evidence of their qualifications for so important a service, and they approved of by the monthly and quarterly-meetings to which they belong; that such young ministers be reported to their monthly and quarterly-meetings; which, upon solid and deliberate consideration, may, as in the wisdom of truth shall seem meet, recommend them to the select-meeting of ministers and elders, in order to their becoming regular members of those meetings. 1773.

Looking into the state of this part of the society, which stands in a more conspicuous point of view than the more private members, the necessity of their being ensamples to the flock appears exceedingly great, particularly in a diligent attendance of all our meetings for solemn worship and the discipline of the church, and therein to be very deep and weighty in spirit, laboring with an ardor of soul suited to the occasion, for the arising of the ancient spring of life; which of a truth is the crown of our assemblies, and the ground of our joy and rejoicing in him, and one in another: It being this alone which preserves living, fresh and active members in the church of Christ, who are enabled to communicate a degree of warmth to the rising youth, and those of less

experience in this most necessary exercise ; not only in word and doctrine, but also in silent, humble waiting on God, for the renewings of help day by day.

That where it shall appear, upon due inspection made, that any members, shall or do neglect or omit the due attendance of their meetings for worship and discipline, through sloth, indolence, love of the world, lukewarmness in religion, or other insufficient cause, that each monthly-meeting take care, that all such be timely visited in love, and acquainted with the desire and mind of friends in that case, and admonished to faithfulness therein. And if, notwithstanding the due Christian labor and admonition, he, she or they, shall continue in the said neglect or omission ; if a minister, his or her public testimony be denied ; and if an elder, he or she be dismissed from that station. 1770.

Advised to have a godly care of judging or contradicting one another in public meetings, or shewing any marks or signs of division therein, among ministers or others ; it being of a very pernicious consequence to bring blame or contempt upon the ministry, and a great hurt to our youth and others. 1716.

This meeting taking under its serious consideration, the beauty and credit of keeping decency and good order in our meetings for worship, advises friends every where to avoid public opposition to a minister, not disowned by the monthly or quarterly-meeting to which he or she shall be-

long, by keeping on their hats in time of prayer, or any other token of disunion.

But if any person, pretending to be a minister, shall give cause of uneasiness or dissatisfaction to friends, in doctrine, behavior or conversation, the person so offending is to be dealt with privately, in a gospel spirit and manner: If this shall not take effect, then let complaint be made of such person to the monthly-meeting which he or she may belong to; that proceeding thereon be had accordingly, and the affair settled with all possible expedition. 1723.

Where friends in any monthly-meeting are really dissatisfied, or burthened with any that take upon them to preach among them, let them first be duly admonished in their own monthly-meeting, with the assistance of the faithful approved ministers, and elders of the same meeting, and adjacent meetings, if need be; and if afterwards they will persist to impose upon and burthen friends, then to be publicly testified against, where they so impose.

If any one who has been a public minister or elder shall be guilty of such practices as may justly deserve public censure, and shall be disowned, and afterwards, upon tokens of repentance, be again admitted into membership; such re-admission is not to be interpreted so as to give him or her the liberty of appearing as a public minister, or exercising the office of an elder, until the monthly-meeting he or she belongs to shall judge the scandal given by such person is so far removed, as that such public appearance, or exercising the office of an elder,

may not administer occasion of reproach, either from friends or others; and in case they should shew themselves too forward in so appearing, the meeting to which they belong is desired to give them such advice as it shall see suitable to their circumstance. 1737.

A MEMORIAL

Of some necessary advices recommended to Ministers, and in the love of the Gospel to be communicated to the several Meetings of Ministers and Elders in the Yearly-Meeting, as caution and counsel.

1. Against undue and restless behavior, under the ministry of any friend, whilst in the unity of the body.

2. That all be cautious of using unnecessary preambles and laying too great stress on their testimony, by too positively asserting a divine motion, and frequently repeating the same; seeing no such pretensions will obtain credit, when it is not manifestly so; and where it is, the baptizing power of truth, accompanying the words, is the best evidence.

3. Against misquoting and misapplying the Holy Scriptures; and it is desired that all those concerned be frequent in reading them.

4. To be careful how they fall on disputed points in their testimony, and making such objections as they do not clearly answer; and also against giv-

ing repeated expectations of coming to a conclusion, recommending the people, &c.

5. Against hurting meetings, towards the conclusion, by unnecessary additions, when the meeting was left well before.

6. Against unbecoming tones, sounds, gestures, and all affectation; which are not agreeable to Christian gravity.

7. Against undertaking or running into employments they have no knowledge or experience of, without the concurrence and advice of friends, as some have done, to their own hurt, the injury of others, and the reproach of their religious profession; but to employ themselves in business that they are acquainted with, to avoid an idle life.

8. Not to speak against persons, or report things on hearsay; but to treat with the parties concerned, and thereby prevent sowing discord.

9. That their apparel, and the furniture of their houses, their tables, and way of living, may be with decency, moderation and temperance; that they be good examples to others.

10. Against men and women travelling together, as companions in service, to avoid all occasions of offence thereby.

11. To beware of too much familiarity, tending to draw out the affections one of another to their hurt.

12. That ministering friends be careful not to hurt one another's service in public meetings, but every one have a tender regard for others; that nothing be offered with a view to popularity, but in humility and the fear of the Lord.

13. Against running, in their own wills, to disturb or interrupt any people in their worship; or presuming to prophesy, in their own spirits, against any nation, city, town, people, or person.

14. That ministers, when they travel in the service of truth, be careful not to make their visits burthensome, or the gospel chargeable.

15. That none show or expose manuscripts, so as to give expectations of their being printed, before they are approved by the meeting for sufferings.

16. That ministers and elders be careful to keep their whole conversation unspotted, being examples of meekness, temperance, patience and charity.

And lastly, as prayer and supplication to God is an especial part of his worship, it must be performed in spirit and in truth, with a right understanding seasoned with grace: Therefore let ministers be careful how and what they offer in prayer, avoiding many words and repetitions, and not to run from supplication into declaration, as though the Lord wanted information: And let all be cautious of too often repeating the High and Holy Name, or his attributes, by a long conclusion; neither let prayer be in a formal and customary way to conclude a meeting, without an awful sense of divine assistance attending the mind. 1703, 1755.

Agreed that when public friends have a concern to travel on a religious visit, and appoint meetings out of the quarterly-meeting they belong to, or to attend the sittings of neighboring yearly-meetings

or quarterly-meetings belonging thereunto, they seasonably communicate the same to the elders of their respective meetings, for their advice and concurrence, before they move it to the monthly-meeting, in order for a certificate.

And when their concern extends to visiting the churches, within any other of the yearly-meetings on this continent, they proceed in like manner. And when the monthly-meeting has given its certificate, they acquaint the quarterly-meeting therewith, for its concurrence, which is to be first had, before the friend proceed. And when the concern extends to Europe, or beyond sea, as the most weighty, clear and deliberate evidence should be obtained in so important a service, in which the reputation of society may be more immediately concerned, it is therefore recommended, that unless such considerations should prevent, as the quarterly and monthly-meeting may judge sufficient, the approbation of the yearly-meeting of ministers and elders should be likewise obtained.

QUERIES

Of the Yearly-Meeting of Ministers and Elders.

1. Are ministers and elders careful to attend their meetings for divine worship, bringing their families with them? Do they diligently attend meetings for discipline, encouraging such of their families to this duty as are suitable?

2. Are ministers, in the exercise of their gifts, careful to wait for divine ability, and thereby preserved from being burthensome?

3. Are the lives and conversation of ministers and elders clean and blameless amongst men? Are they in unity one with another, and with the meeting they belong to, harmoniously laboring together for truth's honor?

4. Do they rule their own houses well, bringing up their families in plainness which truth requires, in dress, language, and true moderation? And are they good examples in those respects themselves?

5. Are they peace-makers in families, and in the church, careful to maintain the discipline, not to screen their own families therefrom, and to administer justice as faithful servants?

It is agreed that none travel abroad as ministers, without being first recommended to and accepted by the quarterly-meeting as such, and that none appoint meetings out of the limits of the quarterly-meeting they belong to, without a certificate from the monthly-meeting or the concurrence thereof.

It is further earnestly and affectionately recommended, that ministers and elders watch over one another for good, to help those who are young in the ministry in the right line, discouraging forward spirits that run into words without life and power, advising against affectation of tones and gestures, and every thing that would hurt their service: yet encouraging the humble, careful traveller, speaking a word in season to them that are weary. And let all dwell in that which gives ability to labor successfully in the church of Christ, adorning the doctrine they deliver to others, being examples of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity.

MONTHLY-MEETINGS.

IN the love of Christ we earnestly exhort you to watch diligently over the flock of God, and deal in due time, and in a spirit of Christian love and tenderness, with all such as walk disorderly amongst you, in order to reclaim and restore them by brotherly counsel and admonition; and when, after patient waiting, you find that your Christian labor of love hath not its desired effect, you neglect not to testify against and disown such persons, and thereby prevent the reproach and dishonor which may be brought upon our holy profession through their means, that the end and design of our wholesome discipline may be answered.

We think it both unseasonable and dishonorable, when persons apply to monthly-meetings on account of marriage, or for relief in case of necessity, or any similar occasion, then to object to them such offences as the meeting, through neglect of their own duty, have suffered long to pass by them unreprieved and unnoticed. 1743.

It is the ancient and constant sense of friends, that any person denied by a monthly-meeting, is adjudged as disowned by friends, and to stand and remain in that state, till by his repentance,

or by the reversal of such denial by a superior meeting, he is reconciled to friends, or reinstated in membership among them, with which this meeting hath unity, and therefore confirms the same. 1727.

When a person commits an offence, as soon as it comes to the knowledge of the meeting wherein he resides, he not being a member thereof, that meeting shall acquaint the meeting of which he is a member therewith.

The meeting of which he is a member shall then proceed to visit and deal with him, unless by reason of distance it be not convenient; in which case they shall apply to the monthly-meeting in which the offender resides, to act for them and visit him; and they shall report their proceedings to the meeting of which he is a member, which meeting shall receive his acknowledgment, or disown him, as in their judgment the case shall require.

If the offender remove, after dealing be commenced, the meeting that had him under their care shall continue the same, if he be equally within their reach, or otherwise write to the meeting into the compass of which he is removed, which meeting shall proceed therein, and report to the meeting of which he is a member, who shall receive his acknowledgment or proceed to deny him as aforesaid. But if the monthly-meeting where the offence is committed judge the case to be of such a nature as to require their more speedy dealing and even disowning the offender, for the clearing of truth according to our ancient care

and practice ; they are at liberty so to do, giving the meeting the offender did belong to as early notice thereof as they can. 1747, 1782.

In case offenders shall remove to places not within the acknowledged limits of any monthly-meeting, it is agreed that they shall be under the care of the meeting to which they are the nearest situated.

If an offender cannot be found, after reasonable inquiry, the meeting to which he belongs, on notice thereof, shall issue a testimony against him, if the nature of the case require it.

Advised, that when persons who have been disowned, manifest a disposition to be again restored to unity with the society, they may inform the monthly-meeting who disowned them, their desire to be so restored, and it is left with the monthly-meeting, after mature consideration of the particular case, to determine upon the mode of restoration. And if by way of acknowledgment, it is advised not to read such publicly, unless it may appear to the monthly-meeting that our testimony will be liable to suffer by the omission.

When a disowned person removes from the verge of the monthly-meeting, of which he or she has been a member, and becomes concerned to be again united to the society, such person may make application to the monthly-meeting, within the compass of which he or she resides, giving information of their disownment, and by what monthly-meeting. The particular occasion of disownment, such monthly-meeting is not enjoined to require.

But if upon noticing the application, the monthly-meeting believes in the sincerity of such individual, and finds nothing to prevent amongst them; inquiry must be made of the monthly-meeting by which the applicant has been disowned, concerning its consent to their reception of such person; and after information therefrom, that nothing appears to obstruct, such applicant may be by them received.

It is the judgment of this meeting, that no testimonies of denial be read in a public meeting, unless it shall appear to monthly-meetings that our testimony will be liable to suffer by such omission.

We recommend to friends in their several monthly-meetings, to take especial care to appoint proper, prudent and judicious friends, to visit their brethren in their families, to inform, advise or admonish, pursuant to former advices; and that such friends labor faithfully, in a spirit of love, and in the meekness of wisdom, to convince the judgments of their respective members of the necessity of their coming up with their brethren in practice, agreeable to our Christian principle; that so the several branches of the testimony, which truth hath given our ancients and us to bear, may be maintained inviolate. 1733, 1751.

It is recommended, that the book of discipline be present in all our monthly, quarterly and yearly-meetings, that the same may be consulted as occasion requires; and as opportunity offers, such portions thereof be read in each monthly meet-

ing, the women being present, as the elders, overseers or other concerned friends, may from time to time think proper, for the instruction, help and furtherance of the young and rising generation, and such as may not otherwise be conversant or acquainted therewith.

NEGROES AND SLAVES.

1. IT is the sense of this meeting, that the importation of Negroes from their native country and relations* is not a commendable nor allowable practice, and that practice is censured by this meeting. 1727.

2. We fervently warn all in profession with us, that they be careful to avoid being any way concerned in reaping the unrighteous profits of that iniquitous practice of dealing in Negroes, and other slaves ; whereby, in the original purchase, one man selleth another as he does the beast that perishes, without any better pretension to a property in him than that of superior force, in direct violation of the gospel rule, which teaches every one to do as they would be done by, and to do good unto all ; being the reverse of that covetous disposition, which furnishes encouragement to those poor ignorant people to perpetuate their savage wars, in order to supply the demands of this most unnatural traffic, whereby great numbers of mankind, free by nature, are subjected to inextricable bondage ; and which hath often been observed to

*This intended as slaves, or against their consent.

fill their possessors with haughtiness and tyranny, luxury and barbarity ; corrupting the minds and debasing the morals of their children, to the unspeakable prejudice of religion and virtue, and the exclusion of that Holy Spirit of universal love, meekness and charity, which is the unchangeable nature and the glory of true Christianity : We therefore can do no less than with the greatest earnestness impress it upon friends every where, that they endeavor to keep their hands clear of this unrighteous gain of oppression. 1760.

3. It is recommended to friends who have slaves in possession, to treat them with tenderness, impress God's fear in their minds, promote their attending places of religious worship, and give those that are young, at least, so much learning that they may be capable of reading.

4. It is our sense and judgment, that truth not only requires that the young, of capacity and ability, but likewise the aged and impotent, and also all in a state of infancy and non-age among friends, be discharged and set free from a state of slavery ; that we do no more claim property in the human race, as we do in the brutes that perish. 1773.

Agreed that no friend import, or in any ways purchase, dispose of or hold mankind as slaves ; but that all those who have been held in a state of slavery be discharged therefrom ; that all those be used well who are under friends' care, and are not in circumstances, through non-age or incapac-

ity, to minister to their own necessities ; and that they give those that are young such an education as becomes Christians, and encourage others in a religious and virtuous life. 1773, 1780.

O A T H S.

ADVISED, that our Christian testimony be faithfully maintained against the burthen and imposition of oaths, according to the express prohibition of Christ, and also of the apostle James, viz. “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths : But I say unto you, Swear not at all : Neither by heaven ; for it is God’s throne : Nor by the earth ; for it is his footstool : Neither by Jerusalem ; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay ; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”—Mat. v. 33–37.

“But above all things, my brethren, swear not ; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath : but let your yea, be yea ; and your nay, nay ; lest ye fall into condemnation.” James v. 12. 1693.

Believing therefore as we do, that no argument can invalidate a prohibition thus clear and positive, we are bound religiously to regard it ; and whilst we feel gratitude for the continuance of that indul-

gence, by which our affirmation is accepted, let us evince our sincerity in relation to this testimony, by faithfully maintaining it.

And when any of our members, either in courts or elsewhere, violate it, either by taking or administering oaths, monthly-meetings are desired to extend brotherly labor towards them, and if they cannot be prevailed upon to give the necessary satisfaction, to testify their disunity with them.

Agreed that oaths administered by judges, justices, selectmen, town-councils, or other officers, who are under the care of friends, is a violation of our ancient testimony, and that such persons ought to be dealt with as offenders. Nor are such officers clear, who admit of clerks or others to administer oaths before them, when sitting in their office, unless there be a number of others present, not of our society, sufficient to authorize the same. 1733.

ORPHANS, WILLS, EXECUTORS, &c.

ADVISED, that friends, in making their wills, have a strict regard to justice and equity, and be not actuated by caprice and prejudice, to the injury of those who may have a reasonable expectation from their kindred and near connexions ; nor carry any resentment, though occasion may have been given or taken, to the grave, remembering we all stand in need of mercy and forgiveness. Also, that none postpone making their wills to a sick bed ; an improper season to settle our outward affairs, in the painful struggles of nature, even if we should be favored with a clear understanding, which ought not to be diverted from a solemn consideration of the approaching awful period of life.

Friends are earnestly recommended to employ persons capable, and of good repute, to write their wills ; as great inconvenience and loss, and sometimes the ruin of families, hath happened through the unskilfulness of some who have taken upon them to write wills, being unqualified to act in an affair of such importance. And all friends, who may become executors or administrators, are advised to make a full, clear and proper inventory of the estate and effects of the deceased, as soon

as may be after the interment ; as many difficulties and disputes have arisen for want of it, where it has been deferred. 1782.

Recommended that friends, who have young children, do in their wills appoint faithful friends to be guardians to them till they arrive at a lawful age : That monthly-meetings take care that such guardians do discharge their trust with justice and uprightness ; and that orphans be admonished to be subject to the wills of their deceased parents, as the said meeting shall see cause. 1706.

Executors and trustees, concerned in wills and settlements, are advised to take especial care that they faithfully discharge their respective trusts, according to the intent of the donors and testators ; and that all charitable gifts, legacies, bequests, and settlement of estates, by will or deed, intended and given for the use of the poor, the aged, the impotent, or putting poor friends' children to education or apprenticeships, may not be appropriated or converted to any other uses than such as the donors and testators have directed and enjoined by legal settlement, will or testament. 1715.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

WE do entreat and desire all parents and governors of families, that ye diligently lay to heart your work and calling in your generation, for the Lord, and the charge committed to you ; not only in being good examples to the younger sort, but also to use your power in your own families in educating your children and servants, in modesty, sobriety, and in the fear of God, curbing the extravagant humor in the young ones, when it doth appear ; and not to indulge or allow of it : For you are set in your families as judges for God, and it is you that must give an account of the power committed to you. And when you see a libertine and wanton spirit appear in your children and servants, that lusteth after the vain customs and fashions of the world, either in habit or outward adorning, and craves your assistance and allowance, without which it cannot get forward while they are under your government ; Oh ! then look to yourselves, and discharge your trust for God, and for the good of their souls, exhorting in meekness, and commanding in wisdom ; that so you may minister and reach to the witness, and help them over their temptations in the authority

of God's power, and when they feel themselves helped and delivered, their souls will bless God for you, and you will reap the comfort of your labor. 1688.

We advise and exhort, that all masters of families, parents, guardians, and tutors of children, would frequently put in practice the calling together of their children and household, to wait upon the Lord in their families ; that receiving wisdom and counsel from him, they may be enabled seasonably to exhort and encourage them to walk in the way of the Lord ; to exercise themselves in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in observing the duties and precepts of holy living therein recommended ; admonishing them to keep to that plainness and simplicity in apparel, speech and behavior, which the spirit of truth led our forefathers into, and which becomes the humble, self-denying followers of the holy Jesus. 1748.

It is our Christian and earnest advice and counsel to all friends concerned, (so far as they are able, or may be capable) to provide schoolmasters and mistresses, who are faithful friends, to teach and instruct their children ; and not to send them to such schools, where they are taught the corrupt ways, manners, fashions and language of the world, and of the heathen in their authors, and names of the heathenish gods and goddesses, ending greatly to corrupt and alienate the minds of children into an averseness or opposition to the truth and the simplicity of it : But to take care that you train up your children in the good nurture, admonition and fear of the Lord, in that

plainness and language which become truth.— And parents and masters, &c. to be good examples to them in a sober and godly conversation, and plainness of speech : and not to use the word you, or ye, to a child or a servant, &c., nor suffer your substance to be bestowed on your children, to furnish them with such things as tend to pride, and to lift them up in vanity, or affect them with the vain fashions of the world. 1690.

It being under consideration how friends' children might be disposed of, that are trained up in the way of truth, and fit to be put forth apprentices ; it is the advice and counsel of friends, that special care be taken to put them apprentices to honest friends, that they may be preserved in the way of truth. 1697.

And that friends of all degrees take due care to bring up their children in some useful and necessary employments, that they may not spend their precious time in idleness, which is of evil example, and tends much to their hurt. 1703.

And it is agreed that none be placed out to any not of our society, unless some special circumstance may induce the monthly-meeting to think it best ; and when any parent or guardian thinks any such special circumstance do attend, they may lay the same before the monthly-meeting where they belong, who are to appoint a committee to examine, consider and report the same, and the meeting to advise accordingly as may appear best ; and it is agreed that no friend's child be placed out to any not of our society, without first having the approbation or consent of the monthly-meet-

ing where they belong ; and when any parents or guardians do act contrary thereto, they be dealt with as those who refuse the advice and disregard the unity of the body.

And it is recommended to all friends who take apprentices, to seek for and give preference to our own members, and to be moderate in their terms, that the children of the poorer sort in an especial manner may be brought up to such trades and business as may, with the Lord's blessing on their prudence and industry, procure for them such a living as will be to their comfort and the reputation of society.

PLAINNESS.

It is also our concern to exhort all friends, both men and women, to watch against the growing sin of pride, and beware of adorning themselves in a manner disagreeable to the plainness and simplicity of the truth we make profession of. Oh ! that they would duly consider that severe reproof which the Lord, by the mouth of his prophet, pronounced against the haughty daughters of Zion, Isaiah iii. where it describes even the particularities of their dressings and ornaments, so displeasing to the Lord, and drawing down his judgments upon them. If those things in that time were so offensive in the eyes of the Lord, how much more so are they now, in a people professing the plainness and simplicity which the gospel of Christ recommends ?

“I will,” saith the apostle Paul, “that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety ; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array ; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works.”—1 Tim. ii. 9, 10 ; where he plainly sheweth that such adornings are contrary to the profession of godliness. The apostle Peter also is

very full in his exhortations on this subject; "Whose adorning," says he, "let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; for after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4, 5; plainly intimating, that those who of old were holy, and did trust in God, placed not their delight in such ornaments. Oh, that ye would weigh and consider these things! "Let your moderation be known unto all men, and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God; but be ye followers of him, as dear children, walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." 1739.

Let not any such as degenerate, in these respects, excuse their own weakness, under a pretence of the misconduct of some, who have appeared outwardly plain; an objection of very little weight: For did they rightly consider, they would clearly see, that the very reason why deceivers sometimes put on plain apparel, is because true men have been accustomed to wear it.

We also tenderly advise, that friends take heed, especially those who should be exemplary to others under their care, that they exercise plainness of speech, without respect of persons, in all their converse among men; and not baulk their testimony by a cowardly compliance, varying their language according to their company: A practice

of very ill example to our observing youth, and rendering those who use it contemptible, and looked upon as a kind of hypocrites, even by those with whom they so comply : Such a mean-spirited practice seems to be cautioned against by the apostle, when he advises, 1 Tim. “ That the deacons be grave, not double-tongued ; ” a caution plainly importing, that it is inconsistent with the gravity of the gospel. 1743.

Where any do not keep themselves or their children, in moderation and plainness, in gesture, speech, apparel, and furniture of their houses ; or accustom themselves, or suffer their children, to use the corrupt and unscriptural language of ‘ you ’ to a single person ; or to call the days or months by the names given them by the heathen in honor to their idols, contrary to the ancient advices of friends, to which we refer : It is desired and advised, that friends from time to time, as such things appear, be stirred up in the wisdom of truth, to take due and prudent care therein ; and if any, by continuing in such practices, reject the advice and labor of their friends, then let such cases be brought forward to the monthly-meeting, for further care and dealing, as may appear necessary, for the support of our Christian testimony.

P O O R.

WITH respect to the poor amongst us, it ought to be considered, that the poor, both parents and children, are of our family, and ought not to be turned off to any others for their support or education; and although some may think the poor a burthen, yet be it remembered, when our poor are well provided for, and walk orderly, they are an ornament to our society; and the rich should consider it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that he who giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord, who will repay. 1718.

As mercy, compassion, and charity, are eminently required in this new covenant dispensation we are under; so, respecting the poor and indigent among us, and to see there be no beggar in our Israel, it is the advice of this meeting that all poor friends be taken due care of, and none of them sent to the town or parish to be relieved; and that nothing be wanting for their necessary supply; which has been according to our ancient practice and testimony. And it has long been of good report, that we have not only maintained our own poor, but also contributed our share to the poor of the respective towns and parishes wherein we dwell. 1720.

Advised that where friends want ability in the world, their monthly and quarterly-meetings assist them, that the children of the poor may have due help of education, instruction, and necessary learning; and that the children, both of the rich and the poor, may early be provided with useful employments, that they may not grow up in idleness, looseness and vice; but that being seasoned with the truth, taught our holy self-denying way, and sanctified of God, they may become a reputation to our holy profession, the comfort of their honest parents, instrumental to the glory of God, and the good of the succeeding generations.—1709.

And as one of the first and great causes which engaged our ancient friends to the orderly establishing of our Christian discipline, was the care of the poor; and as expenses must necessarily arise for their support and education, it is recommended to each monthly-meeting of men and women friends, that they be open-hearted and liberal in their subscriptions for the supply of the poor; and that a treasurer be appointed to receive the same, and open to each meeting of men and women; and two or more suitable friends, men and women, be annually appointed as overseers of the poor, whose business and duty it should be to visit, inspect and relieve them, as becometh the followers of Christ; and that two or more friends be appointed to settle the treasurer's and overseers' accounts.

QUARTERLY-MEETINGS.

WHEN a quarterly-meeting hath come to a judgment respecting any difference, relative to any monthly-meeting belonging to them, and notified the same in writing to such monthly-meeting, the said monthly-meeting ought to submit to the judgment of the quarterly-meeting: but if such monthly-meeting shall not be satisfied therewith, then the monthly-meeting may appeal to the yearly-meeting, against the judgment and determination of the quarterly-meeting.

And if a monthly-meeting shall refuse to take the advice and submit to the judgment of the quarterly-meeting, and notwithstanding will not appeal against the determination of the said meeting, to the yearly-meeting; in such case, the quarterly-meeting shall be at liberty either to dissolve such monthly-meeting, or bring the affair before the next or succeeding yearly-meeting.

And in case a quarterly-meeting shall dissolve a monthly-meeting, the dissolved monthly-meeting, or any part thereof, in the name of the said meeting, shall be at liberty to appeal to the next or succeeding yearly-meeting, against such dissolution; but if the dissolved monthly-meeting, or a

part thereof in its behalf, shall not appeal to the yearly-meeting, the quarterly-meeting shall join the members of the said late monthly-meeting, to such other monthly-meetings as they may think most convenient ; and until such time, shall take care that no inconvenience doth thereby ensue to the members of such dissolved meeting, respecting any branch of our discipline.

And if any of the monthly-meetings, to which the quarterly-meeting shall join the whole or a part of the late monthly-meeting, do think themselves aggrieved, they shall be at liberty to appeal against the quarterly-meeting to the yearly-meeting ; and until such appeal is heard and determined, the friends added by the quarterly-meeting to them shall be deemed their members.—1743.

All minutes and written epistles from the yearly-meeting are to be entered by the quarterly-meeting in fair books, properly kept, that all friends of the said quarter may have recourse to them, as occasion shall require. 1727.

It is recommended to the several quarterly-meetings, that there be held a meeting for divine worship, on the first day of holding each quarterly-meeting, preceding their opening the business, according to the ancient and general practice of friends ; and that the several meetings be held as follows, viz.

Rhode-Island quarter ; in the 8th month, at Portsmouth ; 11th month, at Somerset ; 2d month, at Providence ; and 5th month, at East Greenwich ; on the first fifth-day in the month, at each

place. Salem quarter, on the third fifth-day in the 1st month, at Salem; on the fourth fifth-day in the 5th month at Seabrook; on the third fifth-day in the 8th month, at Lynn; and on the third fifth-day in the 10th month, at Weare. Sandwich quarter, on the first fifth-day in the month; at New-Bedford, in the 4th and 12th months; at Falmouth, in the 7th; and at Sandwich, in the 10th. Falmouth quarter, on the fifth-day before the first sixth-day in the month; at Windham, in the 2d and 9th; at Falmouth in the 6th; and at Durham, in the 11th month. Smithfield quarter, on the second fifth-day in the month; at Worcester, in the 2d; at Northbridge, in the 5th; at Bolton, in the 8th; and at Smithfield, in the 11th month. Vassalborough quarter, on the second sixth-day in the 2d, 9th and 11th months; and the last sixth-day in the 5th month; at Vassalborough, in the 2d and 9th months; and at East Vassalborough, in the 5th and 11th months. Dover quarter, on the fourth fifth-day in the month; at the upper meeting-house, in, Rochester, (Meadorborough) in the 1st; at Dover, in the 4th; at Sandwich, in the 10th month; and at North Berwick on sixth-day after the fourth fifth-day in the 8th month. Fairfield quarter, at Hallowell on fourth-day before the second sixth-day in the 2d and 9th months; and at Fairfield on fourth-day before the last sixth-day in the 5th month; and at the same place on fourth-day before the second sixth-day in the 11th month.

Q U E R I E S.

It is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that it will tend to the benefit of the society, that the following queries be sent to the several quarterly, monthly, and preparative-meetings.

1. Are all meetings for religious worship and discipline duly attended? Is the hour observed? And are friends preserved from sleeping, or any other unbecoming behavior therein?

2. Are love and unity maintained among you? Is detraction guarded against? And where any differences arise, are endeavors used speedily to end them?

3. Are friends careful to bring up those under their direction in plainness of speech, behavior and apparel? To restrain them from reading pernicious books, and from the corrupt conversation of the world? Are they good examples herein themselves? And are the Holy Scriptures frequently read in their families?

4. Are friends careful to avoid the use of spirituous liquors, except for medicine? The unnecessary frequenting of taverns, and places of public resort? And to keep in true moderation and temperance, on the account of births, marriages, burials, and on other occasions?

5. Are the circumstances of the poor, and such as appear likely to need assistance, duly inspected, and their necessities relieved, or they assisted in such business as they are capable of? Do their children freely partake of learning, to fit them for business? And are they, and other friends' children, placed among friends?

6. Are parents and heads of families, with the young and unmarried, careful that all proceedings with respect to marriage be conformable to our discipline?

7. Do you maintain a faithful testimony against the payment of priests' wages, bearing arms, training or other military matters? Against being concerned in property taken in war, buying or vending goods suspected to be run, and against making false entries, to evade the payment of duties?

8. Are friends careful to inspect their affairs and settle their accounts? Are they punctual to their promises and just in the payment of their debts, and careful to live within the bounds of their circumstances?

9. Are friends careful to have all their marriages, births, deaths and burials duly recorded? Are there any friends removed from or come amongst you, without certificates?

10. Do you take due care regularly to deal with all offenders, in the spirit of meekness and wisdom, without partiality or unnecessary delay?—And is judgment placed where it appears necessary, in the authority of truth, according to our Discipline?

And in the preparative and monthly-meetings, when all the foregoing queries are read and answered, the following advices are to be read, with a suitable pause between them.

Advised, that persons who make or encourage proposals of marriage with each other, do early obtain the consent of their parents or guardians, and that none keep company with those who are not of our society, on that account. That no parents or guardians encourage their children thus keeping company or marrying, and that friends be careful to maintain our testimony faithfully against all disorderly marriages.

That all public gifts and legacies be strictly applied to the uses intended by the donors ; or if any unforeseen occurrence should render such compliance difficult or impracticable, that an early application be made to the meeting for sufferings, for its advice or assistance ; and that timely care be taken for the renewal of trusts.

That friends be careful to maintain our testimony faithfully against slavery.

And in order to render the said queries more effectual, it is directed that the answers be full and explicit, comprising the substance of every part of each query, in order that this meeting, being rightly informed of the state of the church in general, the needful advice and assistance may be duly administered. 1761.

That to this purpose they be first read in the preparative-meetings preceding the quarterly-meeting, and distinct answers given in said meetings, to the first, second, and tenth, except previous to the Spring quarter, when all are to be answered ; and those answers carried to their respective monthly-meetings, where the queries are also to be read, and the answers aforesaid ; and those answers digested in each monthly-meeting, and sent from thence to the quarterly-meeting, where the queries are to be again read, and the answers thereto, which came from the monthly-meetings ; and a summary account made in the spring quarterly-meeting, comprehending the state thereof, founded on the answers to the queries, to be entered on their records, and transmitted to the yearly-meeting, and there read ; and a summary of the reports to be entered in the yearly-meeting book.

And that the minutes and reports, which go from inferior to superior meetings, be signed by their respective clerks.

RECORDS.

IT is concluded that there be entered on our records, beside the usual minutes of our proceedings, all the conclusions, advices and epistles, which go from hence, both with the meetings we correspond with abroad, and the quarterly-meetings; and a summary account of the answers to the queries from the several quarters.

And that quarterly-meetings record all epistles, advices and conclusions, received from this meeting; a summary account of the state of the monthly-meetings, from the answers to the queries once in the year; and all their proceedings, conclusions and advices, whether by epistle or otherwise.

And that monthly-meetings record, beside the usual minutes and conclusions, all epistles of advice, and the conclusions of this and the quarterly-meeting they belong to; marriage certificates, with the witnesses at large; births, deaths, burials; all papers of acknowledgment, and testimonies of denial; all certificates of removal, from or to the meeting, and of friends that travel in the ministry; letters of correspondence with other

meetings, and an account of all sufferings for our Christian testimony; a copy of which account is to be sent up to the meeting for sufferings, and after being examined and approved, to be there also recorded; and that all our books of record have proper alphabets, that recourse may be had more readily to any particular, when occasion requires.

REMOVALS AND SETTLEMENTS.

It is advised that when friends are about to remove from one monthly-meeting to another, they first acquaint the monthly-meeting to which they belong thereof, in order for their brotherly advice and counsel in that respect.

And where any so remove, they are to apply for, and if no objection appears against it, to have a certificate of their life, conversation and circumstances, according to truth and justice, as they may deserve from the said meeting; to be produced to such monthly-meeting within whose limits they are going to reside; and that such friend or friends shall from thence forward be deemed members of the meeting they so remove unto, except they were insolvent, or had been relieved by the meeting recommending, or some other meeting on their behalf, within the term of three years preceding the delivery of such certificate; but if any friend or friends, who have delivered a certificate, shall fall into necessitous circumstances, and shall ask and receive any relief within the above limited time of three years, not having contributed to the meeting they were recommended to, such friend or friends shall then continue

to belong to the meeting from whence they were recommended; yet the meeting within the compass of which they reside shall assist and relieve them, and give notice thereof to the meeting which recommended them; and upon that meeting's receiving such notice, they shall immediately take the necessary care of them, and repay the charges the meeting to which they were recommended has been at on their account.

And upon any friend's removing and neglecting to apply for a certificate, the monthly-meeting from which he removed is desired to recommend him without such application; and if that should also be omitted for the space of three months, the monthly-meeting into which such friend is removed, is at liberty to apply for a recommendation, and every monthly-meeting so applied to, is desired to comply with such application, where there is no sufficient cause of delay.

And that no friend gain a settlement by marriage certificate, or other recommendation, unless a removal be expressed therein.

It is recommended, that all certificates of removal, issued by our monthly-meetings, be signed by the clerks of both the men's and women's meetings. 1833.

SALUTATIONS.

FRIENDS are advised against a declension crept in among us by unbecoming gestures, in cringing and bowing the body by way of salutation, which ought not to be taught or countenanced. 1718.

[See Plainness.]

SCHOOLS.

ADVISED, that school-masters and mistresses, who are faithful friends, and well qualified, be encouraged in all places where there may be need; and that care be taken, that poor friends' children may freely partake of such education, as may tend to their benefit and advantage, in order to apprenticeship. 1695.

Quarterly and monthly-meetings are desired to take care, that in all places where schools are set up for teaching friends' children, the masters be diligent to improve and forward their scholars in learning, and to keep them out of everything that would corrupt good manners. 1697.

It is the renewed concern of this meeting to recommend a care for the offspring of such parents, whose earnings or income are so small, as to render them incapable of giving their children a suitable and guarded education, and that especially from home, by which they may be prevented from mixing with others not of our religious persuasion, which so often leads into hurtful habits, from which they are not afterwards easily reclaimed; and as some of our members may incautiously permit their offspring to suffer this great loss,

rather than apply for assistance from their monthly-meetings, it is recommended to friends in every monthly-meeting to seek out such of their members as may be thus straitened, and administer to their help; and it is desired that such will receive the salutary aid with a willing mind, and thankfulness to the great author of all good. 1777.

It is advised that each monthly-meeting appoint a solid, judicious committee, whose care should be to meet as often as occasion requires, and consult together, and assist friends in procuring friends to teach schools, and to advise and assist them in the regulation thereof and encourage friends to send their children to the same.

And it is our advice, that no friends send their children to any other schools but such as are kept by members of our society and under the regulation of friends, without the particular circumstances attending are such as the school-committees of the monthly-meetings may think it best; and particularly the school-committees of friends everywhere, throughout the yearly-meeting, are desired to pay special attention to give the poor of society such an education as may fit them for business.

SCRIPTURES.

RECOMMENDED, as an incumbent duty on friends, to cause their children to be frequent in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in observing to them the examples of such children as in Scripture are recorded to have early learned the fear of the Lord, and harkened to his counsel: Instructing them in the fear and dread of the Lord; planting upon their spirits impressions of reverence towards God, from whom they have their daily support; shewing them they ought not to offend him: but love, serve, and honor him in whose hand all blessings are. 1709.

It is also seriously advised, that no friend suffer romances, play-books, or other vain and idle pamphlets, in their houses or families, which tend to corrupt the minds of youth; but instead thereof, that they excite them to the reading the Holy Scriptures, and other religious books.—Let the Holy Scriptures be early taught our youth, diligently searched, and seriously read by friends, with due regard to the Holy Spirit from whence they came, and by which they are truly opened: For they contain excellent doctrine, rules and precepts, divine and moral. 1720.

And dear friends, inasmuch as the Holy Scriptures are the external means of conveying and preserving to us, an account of the things most surely to be believed concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and the fulfilling the prophecies relating thereto: we therefore recommend to all friends, especially elders in the church, and masters of families, that they would, both by example and advice, impress on the minds of the younger a reverent esteem of those sacred writings, and advise them to a frequent reading and meditating therein; and that you would, at proper times and seasons, when you find your minds rightly disposed thereunto, give the youth to understand, that the same good experience of the work of sanctification, through the operations of the Spirit of God, which the Holy Scriptures plentifully bear testimony to, is to be witnessed by believers in all generations, as well as by those in the first stages of Christianity; in which case some account of our own experience will be helpful to them; and this we recommend as the most effectual means of begetting and establishing in their minds, a firm belief of the Christian doctrine in general, as well as the necessity of the aid and help of the operations of the Holy Spirit of God in the hearts of men in particular, contained in that most excellent book, the Bible; and for the preserving them from being defiled with the many pernicious notions and principles, contrary to such sound doctrine, which are at this time industriously dispersed in this country, to

the reproach of the Christian profession in general.
1728.

And in order to render these advices more effectual, we further tenderly recommend to all heads of families, that they do frequently call their children and servants together; and in a solemn way, audibly read, or cause to be read, the Holy Scriptures; and in so doing that they humbly wait upon God with their families, for instruction and counsel to them respecting Christian faith and practice, according to the former advices of this meeting.

SLEEPING IN OUR RELIGIOUS MEETINGS.

FORASMUCH as our religious meetings are to be attended for the honor and worship of our Almighty Creator, the promotion and enlargement of our own peace, and good example to others ; it is an incumbent duty of every member of our society reverently to attend them ; waiting for and obeying the measure of grace and light received ; such therefore who so far neglect their duty herein as to sleep, or by nodding or bowing the head, or other apparent signs of sleep, reproach themselves, bring a burthen on the faithful, and dishonor the truth, are to be treated tenderly with for their recovery ; and if, after due waiting and admonition in meekness and wisdom, any shall continue in so disreputable and dishonorable a practice, they be not employed nor active in any calling, business or appointment of society, until an overcoming be witnessed, to the satisfaction of the brethren : And if he or she be such as have usually sat facing the meeting, whether minister, elders or others, they withdraw from such seats, that their ill example and reproach may be les-

sened, and take their seats with the members at large, until they and friends are sensible of an overcoming. And, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. vi. 1.

SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

THE excessive use of spirituous liquors, of all kinds, having for a long time been seen by our society to be a practice tending to lead from calmness and innocency, to the many evils which are the consequences of intemperance; and a concern having arisen for the spreading of this testimony, not only to the disuse of distilled spirituous liquors among us, except as a medicine, but that others also may by our example be encouraged to restrain its use within the limits of truth : We recommend to all friends every where, carefully to look at the motives of being concerned therewith, not only of using, but distilling, importing, trading in or handing out to others, who from habit may have acquired a thirst and inclination after it, tending to their hurt. We tenderly advise all such as are concerned therein, to centre down to the principle leading to universal righteousness; and as we apprehend a continuance in such practices will, in this day of light, weaken the hands not only of those individuals concerned to further the reformation, but tend greatly to obstruct society from holding up a standard to this important testimony, as becometh our holy profession.

We entreat therefore those who have begun well, and made advances in the way towards their own peace, that as soon as may be, they forbear the said practices, that a line may in due time be drawn, and the standard raised and spread to the nations. 1784.

It appearing, that notwithstanding the advice and entreaty of this meeting in 1784, and last year; divers of our members have been so inattentive thereto as not yet to forbear the practice of importing, trading in, and handing out distilled spirituous liquors, to the weakening of their own hands, and obstructing society from holding up this important testimony as becometh our holy profession, and a fresh exercise arising, that this obstruction be removed; it is recommended to monthly-meetings, that committees be appointed to labor with all such as may continue in either of said practices, or distilling, and endeavor to prevail with them to a cordial compliance with the advice of this meeting; and if any should continue so disregardful of the unity of the body, as to counteract them in this important concern, it is recommended that they be dealt with, and if unreclaimed, testified against, as those who disregard the advice of their brethren. 1788.

S T O C K.

AGREED, that a collection be occasionally made for defraying the expenses of society, and that it be lodged in the hands of a treasurer to be annually appointed, and subject to be drawn out for the service of truth, by the meeting for sufferings, who are to account for the same ; the treasurer's accounts to be audited annually by a committee, to be from time to time appointed for that purpose.

The sums which may be thought necessary to be raised, is agreed to be proportioned to each quarter by their representatives present, from time to time ; and each quarterly-meeting is desired to be punctual in sending up the same accordingly.

S U F F E R I N G S.



UPON consideration of sufferings in general, it is advised that in cases of difficulty, and where friends who are sufferers stand in need of advice in any particular case, they send up their respective cases to the meeting for sufferings. 1682.

That friends be careful of entangling themselves in law, because of some small irregularity in the proceeding; but if the law be materially transgressed, and the severity of it exceeded by the persecutor, that friends use their freedom, upon serious and good advice among themselves, so as the testimony of truth may be kept clear over all. 1676.

TESTIMONIES AND MEMORIALS.

It is recommended to the quarterly and monthly-meetings, to appoint suitable friends to collect memorials of the living services and dying sayings of ministers, elders, and other friends, whose lives are remarkable for true piety and faithfulness; with the time of their birth and death as near as may be, with a distinction between ministers, elders, and others, and where they lived; and that such collections be inspected by each quarterly and monthly-meeting, and from thence sent up to this meeting, to be again inspected by a committee, and when approved by this meeting to be here recorded. 1760.

The subject of inspecting testimonies and memorials of deceased friends, having claimed our attention, it is concluded that they have the inspection of the meeting for sufferings, after receiving the approbation of the quarterly and monthly-meetings, previous to their being presented to this meeting. 1811.

T R A D E.

ADVISED, that none launch into trading, and worldly business, beyond what they can manage honorably and with reputation; so that they may keep their words with all men, that their yea may prove yea indeed, and their nay, nay; for whatsoever is otherwise cometh of evil; and that they use few words in their dealings, lest they bring dishonor to God through their forwardness; and such as make themselves guilty, by thus dishonoring God, and the holy profession of his name and truth, are for judgment, and the judgment of truth ought to be set over them, that those who walk and abide in the truth may be clear of their iniquities. 1675, 1688.

It is advised, and earnestly desired, that the payment of just debts be not delayed by any professing truth, beyond the time promised and agreed upon; nor occasion given of complaint to those they deal with, by their backwardness of payment, where no time is limited; nor any to overcharge themselves with too much trading, or with business beyond their capacities and abilities to manage in the truth.

It is the advice of this meeting, to the several quarterly-meetings, that care may be taken, that

substantial friends be appointed to visit every family amongst us, where they think there is occasion to suspect they are going backwards in their worldly estate, in a manner that may be [to the ill example of others, or prejudice of creditors ; and to inquire and see how things are with them, advise them in tenderness according to our discipline ; and if they do not manifest a disposition to take such advice, and comply with it, then to give them gospel order, and proceed therein against them.

And, dear friends, this meeting being under a holy care and deep concern, for the glory of God, the honor of our holy profession, and safety and growth of every member of the body ; doth advise and counsel all friends, for their own good, that they keep to such lawful and honest employments as they well understand, and are able to manage, for a necessary support of themselves and families ; and not to launch out beyond their abilities, especially upon such credit as truth may have given them with their brethren or others, and more at their hazard who trust them than at their own, which is not only a dishonor to truth, but dishonest as men, and such cannot be owned in such things to have place in the body. 1710.

Advised that such be dealt with as trade by sea or land, or buy, bargain or contract, beyond their abilities ; and such as keep not their words, promises or engagements, in their dealings ; and do not pay or satisfy their just debts, according to time agreed on. These being a reproach to truth, and a manifest injury and injustice, advice

to all such should be speedily given, and if they do not reclaim, amend and duly answer, they are to be further proceeded against. 1719.

It is earnestly desired, that all friends every where be very careful to avoid all inordinate pursuits after the things of this world, by such ways and means as depend too much upon the uncertain probabilities of hazardous enterprizes; but rather labor to content themselves with such a plain way and manner of living, as is most agreeable to the self-denying principle of truth which we profess, and which is most conducive to that tranquility of mind that is requisite to a religious conduct through this troublesome world. 1724.

Advised that a conscientious care dwell on all our minds, not only to be just in our trade and dealing, neither deceiving the buyer in what we sell, nor falsifying the balances; but that we keep to our promises, and pay our debts in due time; not exceeding our circumstances or reasonable expectations in our way of living, nor engaging in hazardous things more out of vanity than necessity. And it is our advice, when any professing truth finds himself not able to comply with his contracts, that he call his creditors, and declare his condition in time, and by shewing the honesty of his intentions, clear the society from any scandalous imputations; and where any so circumstanced refuses to do so, let him be duly censured. And, on the other hand, we are to remind you to take heed, and beware of covetousness; this grand enemy of the love and faith of Jesus being too apt to prevail in this time and place of outward tran-

quillity, wherein we are a people signally blessed of God. 1737.

It is the sense and judgment of this meeting, that no persons who shall fail of paying their just debts ought to be admitted to act in meetings for business, or join with friends in collecting for the poor and the service of the church, until they have made satisfaction to the monthly-meeting they belong to, and done what is in their power to take off the reproach they have, by their imprudent conduct, brought on our Christian principle. 1737.

We are also engaged to caution every individual against imprudently entering into joint securities with others; for by these practices, many innocent wives and children have been inevitably and unexpectedly involved in ruinous and deplorable circumstances; and exhort them to consider well the ground on which they become endorsers, or solicit endorsements from others. And the practice which has been unhappily prevalent of raising and circulating a kind of paper credit, with endorsements to give it an appearance of value without any intrinsic reality, we entreat every member of our society to avoid and discourage. We also earnestly desire friends to keep strictly on their guard, that none through any specious pretences of rendering acts of friendship to others with safety to themselves, may risk their own peace and reputation, and the security of their families; in order hereunto, we recommend the salutary advice of the wise man, to their especial notice and regard. "Be not thou one of them

that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away the bed from under thee ?” Prov. xxii. 26, 27.

It is earnestly recommended, that friends frequently inspect the state of their affairs, and frequently settle their accounts ; and when any find themselves unable, or have not more than sufficient to pay their just debts, that they immediately disclose their circumstances to some judicious friends, or principal creditors, and take their advice how to act, and be particularly careful not to make distinctions between their just debts, by paying one in preference to another, but to pay them equally in justice and equity, whether arising from endorsement or otherwise.

And if any of our members become so incautious and inattentive to the inspection and settlement of their affairs, so as to contract debts, which it shall afterwards appear they were unable to pay at the time they so contracted, they are to be considered as disorderly walkers, and dealt with accordingly.

W A R.

WE have as a people looked upon ourselves, as well as the primitive Christians, to be included in the notable prophecy, Isai. ii. 4, "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more;" agreeable to the doctrine of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and his apostles (to which our ancient friends abundantly bore testimony, both in doctrine and practice, and suffered deeply for, confirmed and ratified by several of our yearly-meetings, particularly in the years 1693 and 1730, by their express declarations and testimonies against carrying guns, for defending our ships, persons, and goods) and being under many strong engagements to observe the same, from the particular care of Providence over such as have been faithful to this our testimony, particularly those of our friends in Pennsylvania; nevertheless some, professing to be of our society, have slighted and neglected this our ancient and Christian testimony, to that degree as to be concerned in privateering, or as owners of ships going as letters of marque, which is a flagrant and lamentable departure from our peaceable principle, which

hath always been to confide in the protection and Providence of Almighty God, and not in weapons of war ; which practice of theirs may be attended with injustice, barbarity and bloodshed.

This meeting having taken this sorrowful and afflicting case, and breach of our ancient testimony, into our serious consideration, have thought it our incumbent duty to bear our testimony against such practices ; and it is the unanimous sense of this meeting, that all quarterly and monthly-meetings ought speedily to deal with every person found in the practice of such things, in the spirit of truth and love, in order to bring them to a sense of their error, and to reclaim them from it ; which if they cannot do, then to testify against them, and let them know we have no unity or fellowship with them. 1744.

We are sorrowfully affected, by the answers to the queries, that some friends have failed in the maintainance of our Christian testimony against wars and fighting, by joining with others to hire substitutes, and by the payment of money to exempt themselves from personal service, in the militia ; a practice inconsistent with the testimony to the reign of the Prince of Peace our ancients received, and were concerned to maintain through cruel sufferings, and which the faithful in this day dare not shrink from : Which defection from our Christian testimony and general practice having been matter of sorrow to this meeting, we are concerned strongly to advise against, and that friends every where stand faithful and single in their dependence on the Lord for preservation,

who alone is forever able to keep in perfect safety. And if suffering be the lot which doth result from such obedience to the divine requiring, such will, as they abide in the simplicity and innocence of truth, reap the fruits of peace in their own bosom. Let therefore the care of friends, in their several monthly-meetings, be exerted to prevent any contributions for hiring substitutes, or other methods of exempting themselves from the militia, inconsistent with our well-known testimony. 1760.

It is our sense and judgment, that we cannot, consistent with our well-known principles, actively pay any rate or assessment on any town or class of men, which may be imposed for not raising the quotas or number assigned them to raise for any military purpose ; whether it be as a fine for neglect, or an equivalent for such quotas or detachment ; nor any rates or assessments made for the advancing of the hire or enlisting-money of volunteers, or which may be expressly therein ordered to be given or paid to military men. 1762.

We advise that all friends carefully avoid censuring or judging each other, in respect to the payment or non-payment of such taxes, a part whereof goes to the support of war, and a part for civil government.

And it is recommended to friends every where, to take into their serious consideration the inconsistency of any under our profession, suffering their temporal interest to induce them in any manner to contribute to the purposes of war.

It is the concern of this meeting, to recommend to the several monthly-meetings, that they, con-

sistent with our ancient testimony, refuse the payment of all taxes, expressly or specially for the support of war, whether called for in money, provisions or otherwise; and that accounts of distrains for such taxes be sent up; and that such friends as do actively pay such taxes be dealt with as disorderly walkers. We also desire, that all friends carefully avoid discouraging a tender scruple, which may arise in the minds of our brethren, respecting the payment of such taxes, a part whereof is evidently for the support of war; and that all be careful to manifest, by a steady consistent conduct, that they singly aim to experience an advancement in the truth. 1781.

It is our sense and judgment, that it will not be consistent with our testimony against war, for any of our members to receive pensions from government, for military services performed before they became members, though reduced to necessitous circumstances; but that this necessity should be relieved by monthly and quarterly-meetings, and thereby preserve our religious testimony against the anti-christian practice of war, and manifest their sympathy for their brethren, by contributing to their comfortable support. 1818.

WOMEN'S MEETINGS.

OUR women's meetings being set up and approved in the love of God, and by his wisdom and power ; and being of manifest service, and helpful in the church ; it is the earnest desire and advice of this meeting, that they may be upheld and encouraged. 1707.

And in order that the service of women's meetings may be the more extensive, it is recommended that each monthly-meeting of women friends depute representatives to attend the service of their quarterly-meetings ; and each quarterly-meeting depute representatives to the yearly-meeting.

That they proceed in answering the queries, appointing all the proper officers, and conducting the business necessary to their meetings, as the men's meetings are advised, under queries, monthly-meetings, quarterly-meetings, and yearly-meetings.

In regard to the matter of men and women's meetings being united in disowning and receiving members, it is agreed, when any person requests the care of friends, and when any friend is taken

under dealing in any monthly-meeting, such meeting, whether men's or women's, acquaint the other thereof, in order for their uniting their sympathy, and help, if they think it best; and when the meeting to whom application is made, or by whom the friend may be under dealing, is about to receive, restore or disown the person under care, that both meetings be acquainted therewith, and their concurrence or unity manifested before the conclusion be entered; and when the approbation of both men and women be obtained, the same be entered on the minutes of each meeting.

And it is advised, that men and women be attentive and ready in their monthly and quarterly-meetings to unite their assistance to each other, when it appears useful and best, whether expressly desired or not; and that testimonies of denial be read, approved and minuted, in both meetings, and then be signed by the clerk of the men's meeting, if respecting a man, and if a woman, by the clerk of the women's meeting.

Y E A R L Y - M E E T I N G.

THE good and blessed intent and end of this and all our assemblies is, with the Lord's assistance, for his honor in the promoting and maintaining our Christian society and religion, in life and practice, in all the parts and branches thereof. 1695.

It is the fervent desire of this meeting, that the business and concerns thereof be solidly, in the fear of God, managed and carried on, without contention or striving; and with as few words, and in as pertinent expressions to the matter in hand, as may be, for expediting the affairs thereof without loss of time, or any ways disordering the meeting; but one at a time speaking, and standing up, that all things may be done decently, and in good order. 1710.

That the quarterly-meetings be careful annually to depute such friends to attend the service of the yearly-meeting, as are men fearing God, of good conversation, weighty spirits, prudent and sincere, well acquainted with the affairs of truth, and diligent attenders of meetings for discipline at home; whose practice and conversation are answerable to the testimony they profess to bear; men known to be faithful and conscientious. 1714, 1733.

Advised that no representatives withdraw from the meeting before it ends, without leave first requested and granted, that the service of the meeting may not be neglected. 1709.

It behooveth us, in all such our assemblies, to have our minds seasoned with a sense of the weight of the work we are engaged in, and to exert ourselves with a holy zeal for the cause of God, and the promotion of his truth; carefully watching against an exalted spirit, which would strive for mastery and dominion, laboring in love and meekness of wisdom to be helpful one unto another, that "Nothing may be done through strife or vain glory; but, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves." Phil. ii. 3. 1747.

It is agreed, that the Yearly-Meeting for New-England be held on Rhode-Island, beginning with a meeting of ministers and elders, at the 9th hour on seventh-day after the second sixth-day in the sixth month, at Newport; that the meetings for worship on first-day, begin at the 10th hour in the morning and the 4th hour in the afternoon, both at Portsmouth and Newport; and that the meeting for church discipline begin at the 9th hour on second-day morning, at Newport. And that the former clerk, or in his absence the clerk of the meeting for sufferings, act as clerk at that sitting; at the conclusion of which sitting the representatives are to meet and agree upon a clerk for the year, and report the same to the adjournment.

Agreed, that all papers that come before this meeting, as well as quarterly and monthly-meetings, except such as are from immediate correspondents, be first examined by a committee to be from time to time appointed, before they be read in our meetings.

Y O U T H.

WE earnestly beseech our friends, and especially the youth among us, to avoid all such conversation as may tend to draw out their minds into the foolish and wicked pastimes with which this age aboundeth (particularly balls, gaming-places. horse-races, and play-houses,) those nurseries of debauchery and wickedness, the burthen and grief of the sober part of other societies, as well as of our own; practices wholly unbecoming a people under the Christian profession, contrary to the tenor of the doctrine of the gospel, and the examples of the best men in the earliest ages of the church. For as “evil communications corrupt good manners,” so it is the duty of men professing religion, who live in this world in order to obtain a better, not only to “Shake their hands from holding of bribes, and stop their ears from hearing of blood,” but also “to shut their eyes from seeing of evil.” Isai. xxxiii. 15. 1739.

And dearly beloved youth, in a humble sense of the continued visitations of the Father’s love and experience of their blessed effects, we entreat you, by the mercies of God, receive its holy impressions, submit to its discipline; this will preserve you from the deplorable effect of Satan’s transformations, inspire you with holy resolutions, and enable

you to maintain them in all godly conversation, and purity of life and faith, adorning the doctrine of the gospel by a blameless demeanor. True peace will then flow as a river in your minds; and the fruits of the tree of righteousness be brought forth to your inexpressible consolation in Christ, the revival of Zion's beauty, the rebuilding of her desolations; so that by and through you, she may yet appear beautiful to the sincere-hearted, but to her enemies, terrible as an army with banners. 1751.

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